



Clinton wins award from Brazil's macho men

BRASILIA (AP) — Clinton's alleged affair with a former White House intern may have won him a U.S. public opinion poll in Brazil.

Dutch police take no excuses for illegal parking

THE HAGUE (AP) — Dutch Interior Minister Hans Dijkstal said weekly cabinet meetings were saving him from embarrassment over several colleagues who were fined for illegal parking.

Iranian youth pays bride price in oil

TEHRAN (AP) — Iranian youth paid a bride price of one metric ton of vegetable oil and a father said he would give his daughter \$10,000 in gold.

James Bond is succeeded by Britain's first gay spies

LONDON (AP) — The fictional agent of Britain's intelligence has been succeeded by a gay couple.

Majali, Erekat discuss peace process developments

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Monday held talks with Palestinian National Authority official Saeb Erekat during which Mr. Erekat delivered a letter from Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to His Majesty King Hussein on the latest developments in the region and talks with the U.S. administration. Mr. Erekat called on Jordan to pursue its support for the full implementation of Palestinian-Israeli accords. Dr. Majali confirmed Jordan's principled stand vis-a-vis the Palestinians in their talks with the Israelis and their legitimate right to their national land. Attending the meeting were Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh and Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh.

Volume 23 Number 6754



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordanian Press Foundation

جوردان تايمز يومية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية للصحافة

AMMAN TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1998, SHAHWAL 6, 1418

Chirac, Yeltsin discuss Iraq by phone

PARIS (AFP) — French President Jacques Chirac spoke by telephone with Russian President Boris Yeltsin to discuss the crisis over Iraq. Mr. Chirac's spokeswoman Catherine Colonna said. They spoke as a French envoy, French Foreign Ministry Secretary General Bertrand Dufourcq, was preparing to set off for Baghdad with a message for the Iraqi leadership. Ms. Colonna said, Mr. Chirac was to see Mr. Dufourcq later Monday, before the envoy's departure with a message demanding that Iraq "cooperate with the United Nations" over arms inspections. During their half-hour telephone talk, Mr. Chirac told Mr. Yeltsin that "France, like Russia, continues to favour the diplomatic path for getting out of the crisis."

Price: Jordan 200 fils

Arab League chief ready to go to Iraq

CAIRO (AFP) — Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid on Monday said he was ready to travel to Iraq for talks with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in a bid to contain the crisis between Baghdad and the United Nations. "I am ready to go immediately to Iraq to meet President Saddam Hussein to defuse the crisis," the Egyptian news agency MENA quoted Mr. Abdul Meguid as saying. "This will fall within Arab efforts aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the crisis through diplomatic means to avoid any military action," he said. Mr. Abdul Meguid has not been to Iraq since 1991 despite several requests by Baghdad for him to visit, amid accusations by Iraq that he sided with Kuwait over the prisoners of war situation stemming from the Gulf war.

Russian MPs to visit Iraq

MOSCOW (AFP) — A Russian parliamentary delegation will visit Iraq next weekend, extreme nationalist leader, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, said Monday, while calling for an extraordinary session of parliament to debate the Iraqi crisis. The Russian delegation, which will arrive in Baghdad on Sunday, plans to take humanitarian aid and meet with members of the Iraqi parliament during a four-day visit. Mr. Zhirinovskiy was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency. Mr. Zhirinovskiy said he had requested a special session of the Russian parliament to discuss the deepening crisis with Iraq and possible military strikes against Baghdad.

On Iraq, diplomatic means 'far from exhausted' — Yeltsin

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin believes diplomatic options for settling the crisis in Iraq are "far from exhausted," Kremlin spokesman Sergei Yastzhenbelsky said Monday. The Kremlin spokesman, cited by Interfax news agency, made his comment moments after Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov said the Russian envoy to Iraq, Viktor Posuvalyuk, is hopeful that his bid to end the stand off can still "bear fruit." Mr. Posuvalyuk, Mr. Yeltsin's envoy, arrived in Baghdad Sunday in a bid to broker a diplomatic solution to the crisis between Iraq and the United Nations.

Austria warns of escalation of Iraq crisis

VIENNA (AFP) — Austrian Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schuessel called Monday for a peaceful solution to the crisis with Iraq over U.N. arms inspections, warning it should not be allowed to escalate any further. "We must do everything to find a political solution," he said in a statement. "Continued escalation must be avoided because we cannot predict the consequences for the international community," Mr. Schuessel said. He added that Austria, which takes over the six-month rotating presidency of the European Union in July, welcomes the diplomatic initiatives underway, including those by France and Russia, to seek a solution to the crisis. But the minister said Iraq must conform with U.N. resolutions on its stocks of weapons of mass destruction.

Argentine police ne adventurous young driver

BUENOS AIRES (AP) — Argentine police threw a rock at Renzo Cistan when they caught him driving a stolen car. The 19-year-old, a native of the town of Luján, was driving a 1997 Ford Taurus. The car was found in a parking lot in the city of Buenos Aires. The police said the car was stolen from a parking lot in the town of Luján. The car was found in a parking lot in the city of Buenos Aires. The police said the car was stolen from a parking lot in the town of Luján.

Regent: We will not allow use of our airspace against Iraq

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince, Hassan, the Regent, has stressed that the Kingdom's sovereignty and the defence of the national homeland are Jordan's sole responsibility and "we will not allow any party to use our airspace in the event of a military strike against Iraq."

In a wide-ranging interview with the London-based Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) and Jordan Television, Prince Hassan underlined the need for a peaceful solution to the U.N.-Iraq crisis through dialogue that takes into consideration Iraq's security, dignity and sovereignty.

Following are major excerpts from the interview:

Q. What did you discuss with the Russian envoy Victor Posuvalyuk and your earlier contacts with the leaders of the region including President Khatami of Iran?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

King, Mubarak discuss means to contain Iraqi-U.N. crisis

King receives call from Arafat, Regent from Albright

AMMAN (Agencies) — His Majesty King Hussein and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt have stressed the need for exerting all efforts to contain the Iraq-U.N. crisis and to find a peaceful solution that would ward off military action and save the Iraqi people further ordeals and suffering.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the two leaders discussed the recent developments between Iraq and the U.N. and the ongoing diplomatic efforts to save Iraq during a telephone conversation. King Hussein said Saturday

that a military strike against Iraq was inevitable if Baghdad continued to defy the U.N.

The U.S. has threatened to use military force against Iraq if diplomatic efforts fail to obtain Iraqi acquiescence to inspections of presidential sites by the U.N. arms experts.

According to Petra, the King and Mr. Mubarak agreed that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process must be put back on track.

The King also received on Monday a call from Palestinian President Yasser Arafat

who reviewed with the King efforts to resume Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and the results of his meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on Sunday, Petra reported.

Meanwhile, HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Monday received a telephone call from Ms. Albright during which they reviewed the Iraqi crisis.

Petra quoted Prince Hassan as stressing the need for containing the crisis through diplomatic efforts.

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.

Q. What is your view with regard to the obstacles facing the Middle East peace process?

A. I believe the U.N. Security Council

Q. Did the Russian envoy carry a specific idea about the Iraqi leadership's position?

A. As I have said, the U.N. and Iraq have a common responsibility. We have seen American and Russian

meetings in Madrid and a meeting between His Majesty King Hussein with the U.S. secretary of state. We have also learnt that Russia has informed the U.S. that it does not want any harm to be inflicted on the Iraqi people because Washington realises the peoples' sufferings and is seeking to alleviate it. You can interpret this the way you want. It could mean that there is a true desire for overcoming this stage and opening the doors for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and it could also mean that Iraq will be exposed to a military strike if it failed in its commitment. Jordan has been in contact with the Iranian and the Turkish presidents. All are in agreement on Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. All agree that the Iraqi crisis should be contained because no one can predict the consequences of a military strike.



A paramedic carries a Palestinian schoolgirl overcome by tear gas fired by Israeli soldiers in front of the girl's elementary school in Bethlehem, Monday (AP photo)

House committee inclined to return temporary press law to government

By Francesca Ciriaci Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government plans to contest a recent decision by the High Court of Justice revoking tough government revisions to the press law, widely criticised as a threat to public freedoms.

But the 24-member Cabinet of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali has not yet decided whether it will approach the Court of Cassation or the High Council — chaired by the Senate speaker and comprising three senators and five senior judges.

"We are still studying all legal options and alternatives to contest the High Court decision through legal means," a cabinet minister told the Jordan Times on Tuesday.

"But we have not reached a decision yet," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Another government official said that in addition to contesting the High Court's ruling, the Cabinet was looking at all options to regulate the press to help protect citizens from what he described as "irresponsible reporters and

tabloids."

He said the government would probably use its constitutional right to submit to Parliament a draft legislation to amend the 1993 press law.

Meanwhile, the Lower House's 12-member National Guidance Committee (NGC) appeared inclined to return to the government the amendments to the 1993 Press and Publications Law as a way out of the legal bind.

"I think we will return the amended law back to the government. In respect for

(Continued on page 7)

Algerian army kills dozens of Islamists in operation — report

ALGIERS (AFP) — The Algerian army killed between 25 and 60 Islamists over the weekend in military operations against insurgents while some 15 people were killed by suspected extremists, media reports said Monday.

In the Reghaia mountain range 300 kilometres west of the capital Algiers, the army mounted an operation against Islamist rebels killing up to 60 members of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), report-

ed two newspapers, giving different death tolls of 25 and 60.

The GIA is generally held to be the most extreme of the Islamist groups seeking to overthrow the military-backed regime of President Liamine Zerrouk since Algeria's bitter civil conflict began in 1992.

According to the Al Khabar and Le Matin newspapers, the operation began on Friday and the army succeeded in

killing the local GIA commander, Ais Abou Othmane.

Further to the west, near Algeria's border with Morocco, two children had their throats slit by a band of armed men who also abducted three people from a village, the Tribune newspaper reported.

In the village of Sabra, in the same region, 10 people from one family were murdered overnight Saturday by an armed group that entered

their village. Liberte newspaper reported.

The paper also said that the assailants had poisoned the village water supply causing a dozen villagers to be hospitalised.

In another Algerian village a bomb blast killed two people and wounded five others, Al Khabar paper said.

Southeast of the capital, one taxi driver was also killed at a checkpoint set up by suspected Islamists.

Palestinian opposition groups call for end to negotiations

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian opposition groups on Monday demanded the Palestinian National Authority halt negotiations with Israel and allow a new intifada after the failure of U.S. mediation efforts.

The mission over the weekend by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright proved "that the path of the Oslo [self-rule] agreements is at a dead-end," said a joint declaration by six opposition groups, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

The statement said it was necessary "to stop negotiations [with Israel], which have turned into a farce."

"After the latest results by Washington, the time has come to work to save our people from this destructive path and prepare the bases to open the way to the intifada," the statement said.

Ms. Albright met over the weekend with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat but failed to win any progress on

winning implementation of an Israeli troop withdrawal in the West Bank.

Besides Jihad and the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), the statement was signed by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) as well as smaller groups.

Jihad and Hamas have both led campaigns of violence which have left scores of Israelis dead since 1994.

Arafat to visit Spain, Netherlands for talks

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat will go to Spain and the Netherlands this week to gather European support in the peace process with Israel, an Arafat aide said Monday.

Mr. Arafat will go to Madrid on Wednesday to meet Spain's King Juan Carlos, Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar and Foreign Minister Abel Matutes, the Palestinian leader's aide Nabil Abu Rudeina told AFP.

On Thursday he will head to the Netherlands for talks with Prime Minister Wim Kok and Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo, Mr. Abu Rudeina said. The talks in both countries will focus on "ways to save the peace process from its current crisis and activate the European role," as well as deal with bilateral relations, he said.

President Arafat met last week with French President Jacques Chirac and British Prime Minister Tony Blair in a diplomatic push for European support in the current deadlock with Israel over West Bank troop withdrawals.

Palestinian officials spoke of a possible summit gathering Arab and European leaders to put pressure on Israel to back off its hardline stance over the promised troop pullback.

The Arab-Israeli peace process was launched in Madrid with the holding of the 1993 Middle East conference which gathered for the first time Israel, Syria, Jordan, the Palestinians and other Arab states.



CLASHES IN BETHLEHEM: Palestinian security forces Monday train their rifles at Israeli soldiers and warn them to retreat after the soldiers advanced too close to them while putting down clashes with rock-throwing Palestinian youths in the West Bank town of Bethlehem. The Palestinians and the soldiers stared down their guns at each other for a period before the Israelis pulled back amid increasing tensions after four days of clashes in Bethlehem (AFP photo)

Arab-Israeli conflict at dangerous stage — Syria

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syrian Vice President Zuheir Masharqa said Monday that Israeli policies had pushed the Arab-Israeli conflict to a "very dangerous" point.

"The conflict is at a very dangerous stage because Israel wants to keep occupied land and get rid of the inhabitants by any method in order to dominate the region," Mr. Masharqa said in a speech

to an education conference.

He criticised "the United States' unlimited support [for Israel] which recently gave it F-15 military warplanes and which constitutes a direct threat to Arabs."

The Syrian official criticised Israel for its "intransigence and rejection of the peace-process principles, especially since [Prime Minister]

Benjamin Netanyahu came to power."

"Syria is determined to continue... its fight to recover all of our land," Mr. Masharqa said.

Israel occupied the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 Middle East war.

Syrian-Israeli negotiations over land and peace were suspended two years ago.

Syrian government

newspaper Tishrin said there have been skirmishes recently between Syrian residents of the Golan and Israeli soldiers, in which the residents were wounded.

The paper added that the troops uprooted more than 2,000 apple trees between the Golan villages of Massada and Bakata in a bid to confiscate farmland.

Prison sentences for two Jihad members reduced — lawyer

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has reduced the jail sentences of two members of the Islamic Jihad group after they went on a hunger strike for their release, their lawyers said Monday.

The Palestinian Organisation for Human Rights (POHR), which represented Omar Abdullah Shallah and Aziz Al Shami, said it had been notified that the two men's sentences had been reduced to five years imprisonment each.

Shallah and Shami were arrested in April 1995 and sentenced to life and 15 years in prison respectively for allegedly helping organise a double suicide bombing at Beit Lid near Tel Aviv in January 1995 which killed 22 Israelis, 21 of them soldiers.

Nafiz Al Azzam, a leading Jihad official, praised the

reduction in the sentence.

"This is a step in the right direction. We are hopeful there will be other steps," he told AFP.

Mr. Shallah is the brother of Ramadan Shallah, the Syrian-based leader of Islamic Jihad.

Shallah and Shami denied any link to the Beit Lid bombing and the POHR had appealed to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat for their release, saying new evidence had appeared showing they were not involved in the attack.

They held a hunger strike for two months and were taken in comas to a Gaza City hospital Jan. 27, the POHR said in a statement received by AFP.

The next day, the PNA decided to reduce their sentences as a gesture during 'Eid Al Fitr, which marked

the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan, the POHR said.

They have since revived from the coma and returned to prison after calling off their strike, the group said.

The Islamic Jihad and larger Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) reject peace accords signed with Israel by the PNA and have killed scores of Israelis in suicide bombings and other attacks over the past four years.

Palestinian police are holding dozens of members of the two groups, but Israel claims President Arafat is still not doing enough to dismantle the movements and accuses him of releasing their members from prison.

Israel has made tougher action against guerrillas a precondition for pursuing the peace process.

Strike against Iraq would serve Israel — paper

DAMASCUS (R) — An official Syrian newspaper said on Monday that U.S. threats of a military strike against Iraq were raising tension in the region and diverting attention from the Arab-Israeli conflict.

"The international community might forget the stalemate of the Middle East peace process because it is preoccupied with the prevention of a military strike against Iraq," said Al Baath daily, organ of the ruling Baath

Party.

"Such a strike will complicate the situation and put the region in an endless cycle of violence which will serve no party but Israel," it said in a front-page comment.

Al Baath accused Israel of playing a role in stepping up Baghdad's current row with the United Nations over weapons inspections by pushing its ally the United States to attack Iraq.

"The tense atmosphere

suits Israel's aggressive nature, especially that it plays a leading role in this escalation to divert attention from the peace process and undermine all international efforts aimed at rescuing the peace process," Al Baath said.

Ties between Iraq and its neighbour Syria began to improve last May when both agreed to reopen their borders after 17 years of closure and engage in economic and

commercial cooperation within Baghdad's so-called oil-for-food deal with the United Nations.

Diplomatic relations between Syria and Iraq were severed in the early 1980s when Damascus sided with Iran in its 1980-1988 war with Iraq.

Relations deteriorated further when Damascus joined a U.S.-led multinational force which drove Iraqi troops from Kuwait in early 1991.

Argentine president arrives in Lebanon

BEIRUT (AFP) — Argentine President Carlos Menem arrived Monday for a three-day visit to Lebanon, the first by a head of state from the South American country.

Mr. Menem, who is of Syrian origin, was met at Beirut International Airport by Lebanese President Elias Hrawi.

President Menem, who is accompanied by a large official delegation, was due to hold a closed summit meet-

ing with Mr. Hrawi at the presidential palace later Monday.

On Tuesday, Mr. Menem will visit the recently-renovated national museum in Beirut, which was on the greenline separating warring militias during the Lebanese 1975-1990 civil strife, before meeting House Speaker Nabih Berri at the parliament.

He will also visit ancient archaeological sites at the port city of Byblos, north of

the capital.

Lebanon and Argentina have maintained diplomatic relations since 1945, but the South American nation only opened an embassy in Beirut in 1954, the same year former Lebanese President Camille Chamoun travelled to Argentina to meet with his counterpart, Juan Peron.

Trade exchanges between Lebanon and Argentina totalled \$33 million in 1997, Lebanon imports cereals and

oil from Argentina and exports agricultural products to the South American country.

The 1.5 million member Lebanese community in Argentina is one of the most important in the country which has a total population of 35 million.

The Argentine president is scheduled to travel Wednesday to Cairo, the second leg of his tour in the Middle East.

CAIRO (AP) — An Islamist told a state security court on Monday that he should not be punished for killing a Christian.

Attiah Abdul Samie made the statement after Judge Ahmad Salaheddin Baddour found him guilty of the 1993 slaying of a Coptic Christian school principal and sentenced him to life with hard labour.

"A believer should not be killed for a non-believer," Mr. Abdul Samie insisted.

The judge also reaffirmed

the death sentence issued on Jan. 5 against Abdul Samie's accomplice, Gharib Al Shehat Al Gohary. The verdict had been reviewed and approved by Egypt's mufti, Nasr Farid Wasel, who is the government's chief cleric.

The two were convicted of killing principal Fikry Sergious, who was stabbed to death outside his school office in the port city of Suez, 125 kilometres east of Cairo.

Mr. Baddour told Abdul Samie that the Christian principal was "from the people of

the book." It was a reference to the traditional Islamic respect for members of the three monotheistic religions — Islam, Christianity and Judaism.

Mr. Baddour referred to the defendants as "vultures" and said: "These are the helpers of the devil and there is no room for them in this time or place."

Both men had been found guilty in absentia in 1995 of the slaying. Under Egyptian law, people convicted in absentia must be retried after

they are captured or surrender.

A third man wanted in the killing, Mohammad Fawzi, remains at large.

Islamists have waged a campaign of violence since the spring of 1992, seeking to topple Egypt's secular government and replace it with strict Islamist rule. More than 1,220 people have died in the violence, mostly police and Islamists. The Islamists have sometimes targeted Christians and tourists.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10Cartoon — Cro
16:30French Cartoon Films
18:00Small Talk
18:30Border Town
19:00Le Journal
19:15French Documentary
19:30News Headlines
19:35Comedy — A Whole
New Ball Game
20:00What Would You Do?
20:30Encounter
21:10Drama — Burned Bridge
22:00News in English
22:30Feature Film — "The
Deliverance of the Elaine"
23:59Metro Cafe

PRAYER TIMES

05:05Fajr
06:24(Sunrise) Duha
11:49Dhuhr
14:48Asr
17:14Maghreb
18:34Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sveifeth, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church

Tel. 632785.

St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel.
661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel.
622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church
Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel.
771751.

Armenian International Church
Tel. 865897

Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691.

The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Depart-

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

ment of Meteorology

Sunny to partly cloudy weather conditions will prevail with winds southwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman03/17
Aqaba09/22
Deserts02/18
Jordan Valley10/21

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 16, Aqaba 21 Humidity readings: Amman 48 per cent, Aqaba 38 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Ghaleb Zawaydeh736011
Dr. Tawfiq Qub'ain623029
Dr. Hisham Kan'an790280
Dr. Khalidoun Asfour832600
Dr. Fardous pharmacy778336
Al Asena pharmacy637055
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945

Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Nairoukh pharmacy623672
IBRID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir276852
Al Quds pharmacy630341
ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad985550
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Dept661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896590
Public Security Department630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani607071
Shmeisani Hospital669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
Jordan Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 0853200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity644281/6
Akileh Maternity642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani607071
Shmeisani Hospital669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir775111/26
Army, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)883323
Zarqa National Hospital(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital(09)990990

IBRID:
Princess Basma Hospital(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital(02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:25Damascus (RJ)

08:50 Sanaa, Jeddah (add) (RJ)
09:25Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:05Beirut (RJ)
10:15Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:20Cairo (RJ)
17:15 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:30London, Frankfurt (RJ)

Other Flights

14:35Istanbul (TK)
14:40Munich (YP)
16:30Rome (AZ)
18:30Dubai, Damascus (EK)
20:00Tel Aviv (LY)
20:10Beirut (ME)
20:40Cairo (MS)
22:20London (BA)
23:35Amsterdam (KL)
23:35Larnaca (CY)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

07:45Aqaba (RW)
09:05Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:50Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:20Tel Aviv (RW)
18:30Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:20Aqaba (RW)
22:50Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:20Beirut (RJ)
08:25Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:15Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
12:00Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10Paris (RJ)
12:15London (RJ)
12:30Cairo (RJ)
19:30Jeddah (RJ)
20:40Damascus, Larnaca (RJ)
21:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights

02:25Amsterdam (KL)
03:00Athens (OA)
15:40Munich (YP)
15:45Istanbul (TK)
17:30Rome (AZ)
19:30Dubai (EK)
21:20Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40Cairo (MS)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

06:45Amman (QAIA) (RW)
08:15Aqaba (RW)
09:30Amman (QAIA) (RW)
17:45Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:55Tel Aviv (RW)
20:30Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50Aqaba (RW)

NATO allies forge new peace force for Bosnia

BRUSSELS (AFP) — NATO allies are to decide here this week on a new peace force for Bosnia to replace the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) whose mandate expires in June.

They will go to work on the basis of military recommendations that a substantial number of troops should be maintained on the ground after SFOR leaves and that they should be reinforced by a unit of military police.

Sources close to NATO say U.S. General Wesley Clark, the supreme commander of allied forces in Europe, has asked for a new peacekeeping force as big as SFOR with 30,000 personnel, but many countries, the United States among them, want a smaller deployment of 20,000 to 25,000 men.

NATO chiefs of staff have drawn up a plan which they will put Wednesday to the NATO Council, the alliance's highest political authority.

A final decision on the force is not due to be announced until the end of February or the beginning of March, once the plans are approved by the United Nations Security Council.

Contrary to the SFOR, the new force will have no pre-established mandate. NATO allies have agreed to review the arrangement every six months in the light of developments on the ground.

The main novelty in the new force will be the introduction of a unit of between 600 and 900 military policemen or gendarmes to be provided mainly by Italy and Spain. Poland has offered about 100 military policemen, diplomats said.

France, another of the few countries with a paramilitary police force, has refused to contribute to the new police unit, saying it would rather increase the size of its contingent of U.N. police in Bosnia. The U.N. International Police Task Force or IPTF, which is unarmed, acts as adviser to the local police.

The idea of introducing military police into Bosnia is strongly backed by the United States but several other NATO countries have reservations.

"Many countries on the (Security) Council refuse to countenance this police unit as a substitution for local police," one diplomat said.

"We are not an occupation force and must not become one," another said.

The 1995 Dayton peace accords which ended almost four years of war in Bosnia, call for police tasks to be undertaken primarily by the Bosnians. "However, this ideal situation differs from reality on the ground". There are not enough local police and those on the job often "are part of power structures... which do not always wish to cooperate" with international authori-

ties, a diplomat said.

When NATO first went into Bosnia in 1995, the police problem was not a burning issue because what mattered then was to have enough armed troops to separate the belligerents and stop them going back to war.

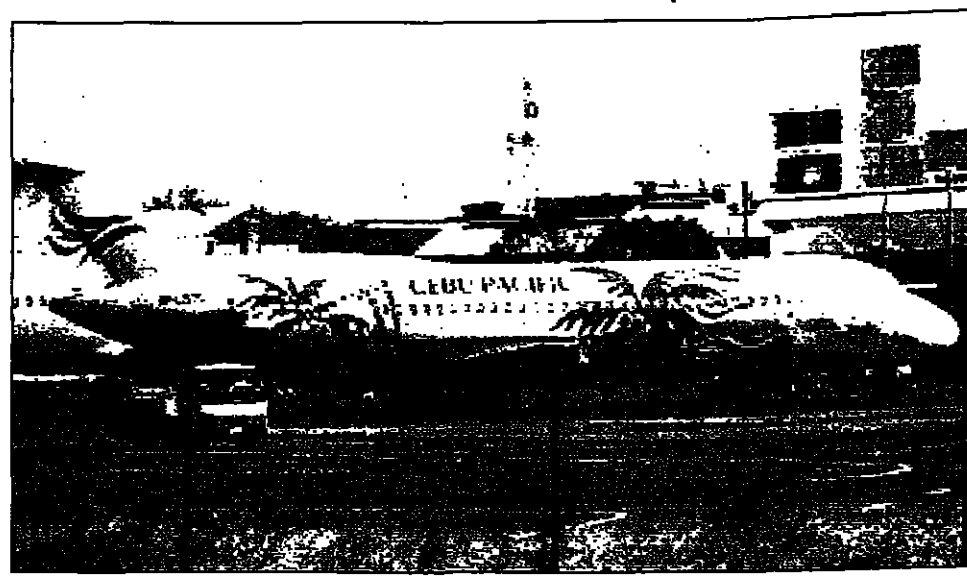
Two years later, the role of the military has become secondary while the civilian part of the mission has become more important.

All NATO members agree that there is no question of handing over responsibility for law and order maintenance to military personnel who are neither trained nor equipped for such a purpose.

"A back-up force like the one being considered will only be there to support the local police," diplomats say.

Nevertheless, on the front lines, there is a serious risk that international military police could come under attack and be dragged into the local violence. "The risk of a spillover exists but it would be greater without any force," a diplomat said.

The problem of policing, which the United Nations has had to face in the past in Haiti and in Somalia and now in Bosnia, will undoubtedly crop up again. In dealing with local crisis situations, the United Nations and NATO must find a way to resolve the issue, according to diplomats.



A Cebu Pacific Air DC-9 plane lies on the tarmac at Manila domestic airport. A similar Philippine domestic plane with more than 100 people has gone missing and there are unconfirmed reports it has crashed in a mountainous area in southern Mindanao Island (Reuters photo)

Wreckage found of Philippines plane carrying 104 people

MANILA (AFP) — Search teams have found the wreckage of a Philippines airtour which went missing Monday on an internal flight with 99 passengers and five crew on board, a radio report said.

The wreckage of the Cebu Pacific Air plane was sighted in the town of Pagalungan, northeast of its destination of Cagayan de Oro, radio DZXL said, citing reports from its affiliate station DXBC in the southern city of Butuan.

It said the main body of the DC-9 aircraft "seemed intact" but a plume of smoke could

be seen hanging over it.

A search operation was launched after the plane failed to arrive on time from its 90-minute morning flight from Manila to Cagayan de Oro City in the south.

Aviation officials said the search was earlier being hampered by clouds.

Assistant Transportation Secretary Carlos Tanaga told a press briefing the pilot made last contact with the Cagayan de Oro airport at 10:48 a.m. (0248 GMT), just 12 minutes before it had been due to land. He reported he was 37 nautical miles from the airport at an altitude of 3,485 metres.

"There was no report that the plane was in trouble. Our deduction is that they were in normal flight. Normally they would make a distress call or they would declare Mayday if they are encountering a problem, but there was no such information from the pilot," he added.

The region itself is mountainous but the airport sits on a plateau and is not immediately surrounded by mountains, aviation sources said.

Activists tour S. East Asia to protest child labour

PHNOM PENH (R) — Activists touring South East Asia in an international protest march against child labour said Monday the problem needed a global solution.

"Child labour is not an isolated problem of one country," Kailash Satyarthi, who heads the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude, told a news conference in the Cambodian capital.

"Its reasons are not localised, there are several international dimensions, that's why the problem has to be addressed globally," he said.

About 100 marchers, many of them children, arrived in Phnom Penh late Sunday as part of an international campaign aimed at ending child labour.

The march, organised by 27 non-governmental organisations from 17 countries, began in the Philippines last month and similar processions are taking place through Africa and Latin America.

All three marches will meet up in Geneva in June, shortly before an

international conference on child labour.

"I'm proud to say that this is the single-largest social intervention in any social issue, not just child labour," Mr. said.

According to the U.N.'s International Labour Organisation, which is supporting the march along with various non-governmental groups and trade unions, there are some 600,000 economically active children in Cambodia and 250 million children working around the world.

Although Cambodia outlawed labour by children under 15, many children work in factories and on construction sites while others scavenge at rubbish dumps or drift into prostitution.

From Cambodia the Asian marchers are due to go overland to Thailand and then head south to Malaysia.

The marchers flew into Phnom Penh after they were unable to cross the land border with Vietnam, and are expected to cross Cambodia's border into Thailand on Feb. 7.

Indian PM to visit Kashmir site of Eid killings

JAMMU, India (AFP) — Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral is to visit a Kashmiri village where nine Muslim protesters were killed by troops on the Islamic holiday of Eid Al-Fitr, an official said Monday.

The official said Mr. Gujral will Tuesday visit Kadrana, some 200 kilometres from here, where soldiers opened fire on a crowd after an attempt to arrest two separatist militant suspects led to violence.

Seven men, a woman and a child died and about 10 people were wounded in the incident. The army said they were forced to open fire after being attacked by the crowd.

A military inquiry has been launched into the incident.

More than 20,000 people have died in Muslim separatist violence in the disputed Himalayan state since 1989. Some separatists are demanding independence, others merger with neighbouring Pakistan.

New Delhi accuses Pakistan, which holds the northern third of the territory, of fuelling the rebellion against Indian rule. Islamabad says its support is limited to diplomacy.

Mr. Gujral went last Wednesday to a village near the Kashmir summer capital Srinagar where 23 Hindus were massacred the previous weekend by alleged Muslim militants. He directly accused Pakistan of backing the killers.

Muslim-majority Kashmir has sparked two wars between India and Pakistan since 1947. Islamabad wants a U.N.-brokered referendum to decide the future of the territory.



Demonstrators in the Kashmir capital of Srinagar pelt police with stones, protesting against the killing of nine Muslims including a woman and a child in Jammu, Kashmir, when Indian soldiers fired on protestors during the Islamic holiday of Eid Al Fitr (AFP photo)

British press publishes pictures of 'mystery Diana car'

LONDON (AFP) — Two British newspapers Monday published videotape pictures of a white car parked outside the Ritz Hotel in Paris on the night Diana, Princess of Wales died, postulating that it could be the "mystery" car French prosecutors have been searching for.

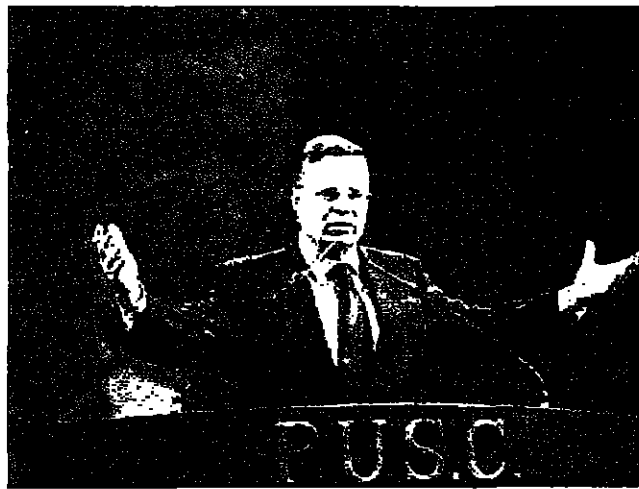
The Mirror and the Daily Mail said the pictures of the four-door Citroën AX had been taken by an Australian couple on holiday in the French capital.

Both papers said the car had chased a decoy Mercedes car similar to the one in which Diana, her companion Dodi Al Fayed and their driver Henri Paul were killed in a Paris underpass on Aug. 31.

Both raised the possibility that the car could have realised it was chasing a decoy and switched to the one carrying the royal party.

The car is similar in appearance to a Fiat Uno, which French prosecutors believe could have been involved in the fatal crash.

Both papers quoted Judge Hervé Stephan, who is leading the crash investigation, as saying the video was an "interesting piece of new evidence."



Miguel Angel Rodriguez of the Social Christian Unity Party (PUSC) kisses his wife Lorena Clare Feb. 1 after an early preliminary official count gave him a 47.4 per cent of the vote in Costa Rica's presidential elections (Reuters photo)

Opposition candidate claims victory in Costa Rica vote

SAN JOSE (AFP) — Opposition presidential hopeful Miguel Angel Rodriguez claimed victory late Sunday in the day's elections, which had opposed him to ruling party candidate Jose Miguel Corrales.

Mr. Corrales, of the National Liberation Party, conceded defeat earlier Sunday, congratulating Mr. Rodriguez. "The people have spoken, we have to listen and follow their will," Mr. Rodriguez declared as thousands of supporters cheered him at a San Jose hotel.

"I come before you with respect and joy to accept the people's will," he added.

Early official results gave Mr. Rodriguez 47 per cent of the votes cast against 45 per cent for Mr. Corrales.

Mr. Rodriguez, head of the Social Christian Unity Party, promised that his government would follow through on campaign promises to create more and better jobs, lower the cost of living, and kick start the economy.

"We are going to build the bridge to well-being to enter the 21st century," Mr. Rodriguez said, adding "this is time the time for national unity, because only with joined hands can we move forward."

Mr. Rodriguez is set to take office May 8.

Toscan du Plantier critical of Irish probe into wife's murder

PARIS (AFP) — French film producer Daniel Toscan du Plantier strongly criticised the Irish police for the way they investigated the 1996 murder of his wife near Cork, in an interview published Monday in Le Figaro daily.

Sophie Toscan du Plantier was found battered to death on Dec. 23, 1996, near her house at Skul in southern Ireland. Irish police twice briefly detained a "prime suspect" but had to release him for lack of proof.

Speaking publicly on the subject for the first time, Toscan du Plantier complained about the attitude of the Irish police who, he said, had identified their suspect without having enough evidence to arrest him.

He said he had broken his silence after 13 months "to say that my silence was not indifference.... Sophie would not have liked me to speak out. I hope she will forgive me today."

Toscan du Plantier denied that his wife had gone to her house at Skul near Cork in December 1996 because she was leaving him, or that she had a "French lover" as some reports claimed.

"Not that I could not accept the idea that Sophie had a lover, but it was not the case.... We loved each other. There had been some difficult moments but at

that time, we were very close," he said.

"She went there because she had a house there which she chose herself and which her husband gave her. It was not in any way a break-up scenario."

He said his wife never went to the house alone, except that one time when he had too much work to accompany her and nobody else wanted to go. "She had three days to spend before we went to Dakar. She wanted to go because the heater was broken and she didn't want the housekeeper to think she did not care about the house," he said.

Toscan du Plantier said he and his family had heard about the murder "of a French woman in Ireland" on the evening of Dec. 23 on television but had not been contacted by the Irish police. "I was alone in front of my television set trying to understand what had happened. She had been found in the morning... that gives you an idea of the way they handled it on the first day."

"That night at about 10:00 p.m., my son called Ireland. It was the housekeeper who answered and said 'I can't talk to you'. My son insisted and then a man came on, a policeman who did not give his name and who asked: 'Who are you?' and then amazingly, 'Why do you call?' I'm not kidding."

"Right away, we were treated with suspicion.... The Irish told us nothing. They never called back.... We still don't know the precise time Sophie died. The body was 36 hours on the path.... Finally it was (French) Foreign Minister Hervé de Charette who informed me officially that Sophie had been murdered. The first humane gesture came from France," he said.

Asked what he thought about the suspect, Eoin Bailey, a British freelance journalist who lives near Sophie's house, he said: "I don't get it. This Mr. Bailey is the only suspect we have been shown. When the Irish police arrested him the first time, they told us: 'We've got him. He's in the car.' He has been the prime suspect from the start. But I don't want them to give me a name if they cannot prove it. After the inexplicable silence of the first day, this media hype is incredible in a country with habeas corpus. Rarely have police been so sure of their suspicions and at the same time so incapable of finding the evidence."

"I criticise them for throwing to the sharks someone they considered the sole suspect from the beginning. I criticise them for revealing his name with incredible recklessness because: if there is one chance in a hundred that he is innocent, it is terrifying."

Toscan du Plantier said he was sad to note that Bailey "has chosen to court the media to fight suspicion."

"This journalist who was hitherto unknown, has become a recurring media figure.... He is famous. A negative hero. It seems to me that the fact that he wants to talk, fuels suspicion. If I were in his place and I were innocent, I would have run away and changed my name and lifestyle."

He said Sophie was "afraid of nothing" and might have been the victim of a sex attacker. "They say it was not a sexual crime but that might have been the trigger. Someone might have wanted to seduce a woman, to rape her. She refused, resisted and there you are.... She was battered on the head with unbelievable savagery. It was to silence her. There is no doubt about that. But I don't think this crime was premeditated."

Today Toscan du Plantier lives with another woman who is pregnant with his child. "I have not yet remarried out of respect for Sophie. But that will doubtless come. I am living with a woman who is expecting a child. We must respond to death with life, even though 'memory and suffering remain', he said.

50,000 people still without power in Quebec

MONTREAL (AFP) — Some 50,000 residents of southern Quebec were still without power Sunday, almost a month after a devastating ice storm struck eastern Canada, authorities said Sunday.

The 19,000 households without electrical power should be reconnected by the end of the week, André Caille, president of the provincial power authority Hydro-Quebec, told a press conference.

The people still shivering in the dark live mostly in rural pockets south of here, where more than 1,500 people, helped by 300 army troops, were working to restore transmission lines.

The ice storm, which hit Jan. 5, toppled about 100 pylons and more than 20,000 wooden power poles.

Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard said 50 emergency centres would remain open in the region for the 1,000 people who are staying there and the 5,000 to 6,000 dropping by for meals.

At the peak of the crisis on Jan. 9, more than one million people were without power, and Montreal looked like a ghost town coated in ice.

to labour

ational conference
id labour.
proud to say that
the single-largest
intervention in any
issue, not just child
Mr. said.
ording to the U.N.
ational Labour
isation, which is
ring the march
with various non-
mental groups and
unions, there are
600,000 economic
active children in
odia and 250 mil-
children working
d the world.
ough Cambodia
vs labour by chil-
work in factories and
construction sites
others scavenge a
sh dumps of debris
stitution.
n Cambodia the
marchers are due to
erland to Thailand
hen head south to
sia.
marchers flew in
n Penh after they
unable to cross the
border with Vietnam.
re expected to cross
odia's border in
and on Feb. 7.

illings



th stones, protesting
a child in Jammu.
amic holiday of Eid

,000 residents of
ople still
thout
wer in
rebec

REAL (AFP) —
50,000 residents of
in Quebec were cut
it power Sunday
a month after a de-
ice storm and
Canada's power
nday.
19,000 households
it electrical power
d of the week. And
president of the
cial power authority
Quebec, told a press
ence.
people still shivering
dark live mostly in
sockets south of here,
more than 1,500 people
elped by 300 am-
were working to
transmission lines.
ice storm, which hit
toppled about 100
wooden power poles.
sec Premier Lucien
said 30 emergency
centres would remain
in the region for the
people who are stay-
ing and the 5,000 to
dropping by for
e peak of the crisis on
more than one mil-
people were without
and Montreal looked
ghost town covered in

Carter, Gorbachev join call to reduce nuclear threat

WASHINGTON (R) — Over 100 former or current heads of state and leaders from around the world, including ex-presidents Jimmy Carter and Mikhail Gorbachev, have signed a statement calling the elimination of nuclear weapons "a moral imperative." The Washington Post reported Monday.

The statement, that was to be released Monday, echoed a similar appeal by 60 generals and admirals in late 1996, and reflected growing support for the cause of nuclear abolition among those who have been directly in responsible for nuclear weapons.

"The world is not condemned to live forever with threats of nuclear conflict or the anxious fragile peace imposed by nuclear deterrence," the document said, according to the Post report.

"Such threats are intolerable and such a peace unworthy. The sheer destructiveness of nuclear weapons invokes a moral imperative for their elimination."

Endorsing the message were 117 prominent individuals from 46 nations, including 46 past or present presidents and prime ministers, including former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard, and former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.

The statement advocated placing all atomic warheads in storage away from launchers, halting production of materials for nuclear weapons and initiating U.S.-Russian talks immediately to achieve deeper cuts in arsenals.

They also urged serious consideration of repatriating nuclear weapons deployed abroad, adopting a policy of "no first use" of atomic weapons and banning production and possession of long-range ballistic missiles, the Post said.



Australia's monarchist Prime Minister John Howard (left) in animated discussion with republican Barry Jones (centre), as opposition Labor leader Kim Beazley looks on (right), at the old parliament house in Canberra (Reuters photo)

Australia set to expel 'students' over visa racket

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australian universities were urged by the government Monday to vet applicants for student visas more carefully after almost 3,000 illegal immigrants used them as a back door into the country.

Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock announced a crackdown on abusers after his department discovered more than four per cent of the 70,000 overseas students currently in Australia were working illegally after overstaying their student visas.

"We have an overstay rate of something in the order of 2,800 out of 70,000 students who might be here in Australia today," Mr. Ruddock told reporters in Canberra.

"That is of concern to us. If a person is detected abusing the system, the visa that they hold can be terminated and they would be asked to leave Australia."

The minister confirmed a report here that some "students" are typically applying for the Australian dollar 250 (\$167) visas, promising to pay full university or school fees and then taking jobs instead of lessons.

One bogus Chinese applicant was found out when he applied to study at a girls-only high school.

Immigration officials discovered an illegal immigrant from the Pacific island of Tonga after a car crash in which three people — including a newly wed couple — were killed when he allegedly drove the wrong way on a freeway. He entered Australia on a student visa.

Sydney's Daily Telegraph cited a group of 26 enrolled in PhD courses in Brisbane, none of whom had attended the courses; all had received a refund of fees before transferring to courses in Sydney for which they would not have been granted student visas in the first place.

The majority of people abusing the system were from the Middle East, North Asia and South East Asia.

Mr. Ruddock's department said he had ordered a departmental review to look into the problem and recommend solutions such as ensuring overseas students could not downgrade or change university courses.

"I'm hoping universities and educational institutions would see it as important as we do and look at bona fide issues rather than simply being satisfied they've got somebody in who's got sufficient money to pay for fees," he said.

However, the government is considering the possibility of raising the immigration intake following a new report showing the population in decline next century.

Mr. Ruddock said if a larger population were considered desirable in the long-term, the government would have to consider adjusting its migration program.

"We're having some discussion," he said. "But obviously I'm not going to foreclose the consultative process before the government has an opportunity to consider the views being put."

Australian PM offers republic by 2001

CANBERRA (R) — Australians could vote on cutting the country's ties with Britain next year and have a republic in place by 2001, monarchist Prime Minister John Howard said Monday.

Speaking at the opening of a two-week convention to consider Australia becoming a republic, Mr. Howard said that if clear support for a particular republican model emerged, it would be put to a referendum before the end of 1999.

"If the people then decide to change our constitution, the new arrangements will be in place for the centenary of the inauguration of the Australian nation and the opening of the new millennium on the first of January, 2001," said Mr. Howard.

Mr. Howard, who opposes a republic, said he would ask Australians to vote in a preliminary plebiscite on options for a republic if the two-week convention did not reach a consensus on a preferred alternative.

A formal referendum would then follow, offering a choice between the present system and the most popular alternative.

But the promise for a vote on a republic was dependent on Mr. Howard's reelection at the next poll, due by mid-1999 but widely expected later this year.

More than 50 per cent of Australians support a republic, Labour opposition leader Kim Beazley, a republican, has vowed to have a republic and Australian president in place by the Sydney 2000 Olympics — if he wins the next election. "Our nation is a republic in all but name," Mr. Beazley said.

Formerly a British colony, Australia currently has a Westminster-style government, in which a prime minister and cabinet answer to parliament.

The British established six separate colonies here after settlement of the continent in 1788, but these were federated into a single self-governing country in 1901.

The British queen remains head of state, but the role is ceremonial. She is represented here by the governor-general.

Mr. Howard asked convention delegates to not only consider the merits of Australia's becoming a republic, but also the development of a republican model on which people can vote.

He acknowledged that Australia's ties with Britain had diminished in the past 40 years as Australia has grown more culturally diverse, and admitted that sharing the country's head of state with other nations was no longer appropriate.

Figures released Monday showed 23 per cent of Australia's 18 million population were immigrants, with 13.9 per cent of the population born in non-English speaking countries. Australia's immigrant base was traditionally Britain and Ireland. While most still come from Europe, the number from Asia, the Middle East and Africa was rising.

Australia's increasing cultural diversity is an argument used by republicans, including Aboriginal leader Gajil Djerrkura who says ties with Britain are now outdated.

"It is (the Aboriginal) view that Australia should now, with pride, recognise and acknowledge the cultural diversity of its people," Mr. Djerrkura said. "We are a very different country today from what we were when the Australian constitution was drawn up."

But Mr. Howard warned that a republic would not offer Australia the same political stability. "I oppose Australia becoming a republic because I do not believe that the alternatives so far canvassed will deliver a better system of government..."

Japanese official tipped for senior U.N. post

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Kensaku Hogen, a Japanese diplomat, is expected to be named to the new post of U.N. undersecretary-general for communications, diplomats and U.N. sources said over the weekend.

It was not known when Secretary-General Kofi Annan would make the announcement but one senior envoy said it was expected "sooner rather than later."

Mr. Hogen, 56, is director-general of Japan's Foreign Service Training Institute. He has been a consul-general in Boston and Honolulu and a director of the foreign ministry's Middle East and African affairs bureau.

The new U.N. post is expected to coordinate several public affairs units, such as the public information department, the spokesman's office and speechwriting.

The most senior U.N. officials after Mr. Annan and his deputy, Louise Frechette of Canada, hold the rank of undersecretary-general. There are currently about 20 at U.N. headquarters and some 25 in other centres, including the heads of most U.N. agencies.

Among the agency directors is Sadako Ogata, the Geneva-based U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, who is currently the highest-ranking Japanese in the U.N. system.

Mr. Annan, diplomats said, needed to reward Tokyo with a senior post after several Japanese officials vacated their U.N. jobs. They included Undersecretary-General Yasushi Akashi in New York and Hiroshi Nakajima, the director of the World Health Organisation in Geneva.

Japan is the second-highest-assessed contributor to the United Nations, carrying 17 per cent of the regular budget in 1998 and an expected 20 per cent by the year 2,000.

MPs denounce police incompetence in Dutroux probe

BRUSSELS (AFP) — A Belgian parliamentary commission, according to the report as quoted by Belga.

The parents of one of Dutroux' alleged victims accused Brussels authorities this month of wanting to cover up the case.

The parents of Melissa Russo told the French weekly Paris Match that Belgian judicial authorities were trying to pretend that Dutroux was acting alone.

They said they would not cooperate with any trial staged on such a basis, as it would be a masquerade.

Unconfirmed reports when the Dutroux case broke spoke of paedophile rings involving senior figures in Belgian society.

In October a petition signed by 3,000 people was handed to the European Parliament calling for the resignation of Belgian former Justice Minister Melchior Wathelet from the European Court over his role in the handling of the Dutroux investigation.

The petition claimed Mr. Wathelet, who now represents Belgium at the European Court in Luxembourg, was "seriously compromised in the Dutroux affair", in particular for having approved the release on parole in 1992 of Dutroux who had served only half of a 13 and a half year sentence for kidnapping and raping children.

Drug makers to give lifetime care to volunteers in AIDS vaccine trial

CHICAGO (AFP) — Volunteers testing a live AIDS vaccine announced here Sunday that three major drug companies had agreed to provide them with free lifetime care if they contract the disease.

The proposed vaccine trial of a weakened but live HIV vaccine, which was announced last year, is sponsored by the Chicago-based International Association of Physicians in AIDS Care.

Jose Zuniga, the association's deputy director, said that the group had approached four drug companies to provide four drug therapies to the human guinea pigs should the need arise.

"Three of these companies (Abbott, Bristol-Myers Squibb and Hoffmann-La Roche) have stepped forward and agreed to donate (anti-viral) drugs," he added.

The fourth company, Glaxo Wellcome, is still studying the request.

Mr. Zuniga said the volunteers in the unprecedented trial were not expected to contract the disease but added that the group had sought help from the drug companies to show that it was not reckless.

"It's been heartening to see the number of volunteers increase from the initial core of 50 to over 275," he added. Roughly 25 per cent of the volunteers are physicians.

"The important thing is the assurance from the White House that if the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves the protocol (for the test), there will be funding to conduct the trial," Gordon Nary, the association's director said.

The group said it hoped to get FDA approval to begin the trial by 2000.

Mr. Zuniga said the vaccine trial would start with five volunteers aged between 25 and 67 who are fully informed of the risks. The five would be monitored over a period of six to nine months to see whether they are developing AIDS. The goal is to determine the safety and tolerability of the vaccine as well as how the volunteers' immune systems react to it.

If the vaccine is found to be safe, it would then be administered to six more volunteers. The number of participants would gradually increase to reach an as yet undetermined number, association officials said.

Indonesian flights disrupted as haze returns

JAKARTA (AFP) — Thick haze caused by forest fires has returned to northern Indonesia and forced delays for flights in and out of the city of Balikpapan, an official said Monday.

The landing schedules of several smaller aircraft using a visual landing system had to be delayed," Wahyu said from the control tower at the city's airport.

The last flight delays were Saturday, he said, adding visibility had since returned to between eight and 10 kilometres.

The haze, which wreaked havoc across southeast Asia last year when it spread from Indonesia, reduced visibility around the airport to as little as 700 metres on Jan. 28 and Jan. 29, control tower official Agus Mulyono told the Jakarta Post.

"Several morning flights to and from Balikpapan were delayed. They resumed after 12 noon when visibility had gradually improved," he said.

Fires are burning in forests less than 40 kilometres from the airport. The haze, blamed on excessive logging and slash and burn farming, last year forced the cancellation of thousands of flights. Deaths and illness to tens of thousands of people were attributed to the haze.

The fires then were mainly in Kalimantan, Indonesia's section of the island of Borneo, and on Sumatra Island.

Sci-fi writer in Sri Lanka stung by child-sex allegations

COLOMBO (AFP) — Science fiction guru Arthur C. Clarke, seeking to avoid embarrassing Britain's Prince Charles, said Monday he had asked for his planned investiture as a knight to be postponed amid allegations that he had sex with boys in Sri Lanka.

"I am outraged by the Sunday Mirror allegations and I am seeking legal advice," the British author said in a statement from his home in Colombo, where Prince Charles is due to arrive on an official visit Tuesday.

"However, in view of the nature of this story, I have asked that my investiture be postponed in order to avoid embarrassment to his royal highness the Prince of Wales during his visit to Sri Lanka."

Prince Charles' visit is mainly to attend celebrations Wednesday to mark Sri Lanka's 50th anniversary of independence from Britain.

He was to have knighted Mr. Clarke the same day after the 80-year-old author and scientific visionary was named by Queen Elizabeth II in her New Year's honours list.

British High Commissioner David Tatham said Mr. Clarke had told him he would seek a postponement.

Asked whether the request would be granted, Mr. Tatham said: "That's for the palace (Buckingham Palace) to decide. We will sort it out today or tomorrow."

The furore began when



British-born space visionary Arthur C. Clarke is shown in a 1996 January file photo (Reuters photo)

ready to celebrate our independence (golden jubilee)," a foreign ministry source said.

"First we will have to establish if he actually said it. Thereafter the law can take its course. We also don't know in what context the interview took place."

Monday, before his statement in Colombo, Britain's Sun newspaper quoted Mr. Clarke as angrily denying the Sunday Mirror report.

"I am convinced this whole exercise is a cheap attempt to embarrass my friend Prince Charles," he told the mass-circulation daily.

"I am against mucking about with small boys. There is no truth in the allegations. I have not been sexually active for more than 20 years."

Mr. Clarke added he had a prostate operation a decade ago in addition to post-polio paralysis and had been in a wheelchair for over a year.

Mr. Clarke, who lives in Colombo's leafy Barnes Place diplomatic quarter, has published numerous best-selling science fiction novels. He is also credited with being the first to predict the future of satellite communications back in 1945 when he published his theory on geo-stationary satellites.

He is the first foreign celebrity to be given tax-free status in Sri Lanka, is chancellor of Colombo's Moratuwa University and has a technology institute named after him.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.
 جوردان تايمز مؤسسة صحفية مستقلة تصدر باللغة الإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
 MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:
 MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
 GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 5684311, 5699634, 5667171, 5603585

Facsimile: 5696183

E-mail: jotimes@go.com.jo

Web Sites: http://accessme.com/JordanTimes/

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Netanyahu fails peace partners

AGAINST EXPECTATIONS that Israel would heed American requests to put forward a new and promising formulation to reactivate the stalled peace talks on the Palestinian front, gestures proffered by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to his negotiating partners continue to fall short of what needs to be done at this critical juncture. Not only do his offers fail to live up to previous agreements between the two sides, the conditions he is attaching to implementing them make it almost a mission impossible to achieve real progress. Take for example the demand for a crackdown against Hamas he is making on by Palestinian National Authority (PNA). Of course we all know by now that no matter how far the PNA goes in fighting terrorism, Netanyahu and company will not be satisfied. Their demand for an effective campaign against Hamas appears more and more as an open-ended exercise which will offer them repeated opportunities to back away even from those very modest offers of withdrawal from the West Bank they are making to move the peace process forward.

But what is even more dangerous is the tendency by the Israeli government to take advantage of the tension in the Gulf to drag its feet on the question of making peace with the Arab side. The first order of business for Israel should be to put its own house in order. Unless and until the prime minister makes up his mind on whether this is exactly his goal and frees himself from the stresses and strains of the ultra-religious and ultra-nationalists in his own camp we will have problems not only in the Gulf but much closer to home. Israel will have to cope anew with violence, bloodshed and instability in its own backyard.

Netanyahu should know that his own interests coincide with, if they not actually the same as, those who seek success for Arab-Israeli peace and stability throughout the Middle East. He probably ought to explore more seriously and expeditiously the idea of forming a national unity government comprising the Labour Party, without which he will not enjoy the power or mandate to reach a settlement with his Palestinian neighbours and the rest of the Arab World. This idea has been floating around for some months now and it is high time that Israelis took advantage of it today.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Arab Al Yawm's Marwan Hazine called for an Arab summit to address the pressing issues facing the nation, particularly the deadlocked peace process. Since the 1990 Arab summit held in Cairo following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the Arab leaders have failed to meet again to discuss matters of urgency to their peoples at the political, economic and other levels, said the writer. The Arabs are witnessing Israel's disregard of the peace accords concluded with the Palestinians, its continual aggression on southern Lebanon and its continued occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights but are doing nothing collectively to meet the challenge or at least to force Israel to abide by the U.N. resolutions, Hazine said. He said Israel has been given the chance by the Arabs to deal with them unilaterally starting with the Camp David agreement with Egypt, and this is a weak point on the part of the Arab Nation which despite its realisation of the seriousness of the situation remains divided. Hazine said there is urgent need for the Arabs to forego their petty differences and pool their efforts at the international level in order to force the Jewish state to comply with the U.N. resolutions concerning the occupied Arab lands.

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek said that when the U.S. launched an aggression on Iraq in 1991 it justified the action with the excuse that it wanted to liberate Kuwait and that war stopped only when Washington believed that the internal struggle and a rebellion would finish off the regime in Baghdad. But when the ultimate goal was not achieved the U.S. decided to wage another war, and this time it would go it alone without any support from the Arab countries or the other nations with the exception of Britain with the hope of humiliating and ousting the regime in Baghdad, according to Dr. Fanek. He said this time the U.S. is determined to wage a prolonged war in order to achieve its purpose and put Ahmad Chalabi or other Iraqi dissidents in power under their influence but not before destroying everything in Iraq and depriving its people of water and electricity. Dr. Fanek referred to the current tour of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Europe and the Middle East by saying that she is not seeking backing for the coming offensive but rather is attempting to explain why Washington is waging this war on Iraq. The writer said that in 1956 the Arabs stood together supporting Egypt in the face of aggression and in 1991 they were split over the war on Iraq and now one has to wait and see whether the Arabs will all adopt a passive attitude in the 1998 war on Iraq.

View from the Fourth Circle

Wider context of the Iraqi/Anglo-American face-off

By Rami G. Khouri

WHY IS the renewed anticipation of American-British use of punitive military force against Iraq finding so few supporters in the Middle East? Because this issue far transcends Iraqi behaviour, and raises troubling questions about the wider Western role in the Middle East, the conduct of both Iraq and Israel, and the role of world powers in implementing United Nations resolutions.

The Anglo-Americans see a one-dimensional case of a proven evil man, Saddam Hussein, who must be forced to comply with U.N. resolutions designed to prevent him from acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction against Israel, Kuwait, Iraqis, or anyone else in the region. Most Arabs and other Middle Easterners see a wider, older combination of ills, illegality, immorality and irredentism plaguing the Middle East, including but not confined to Iraq.

Simply put, most Middle Easterners oppose the American use of force against Iraq to force Baghdad's full compliance with U.N. resolution 687 because they feel that they are being subjected to grossly unfair double standards and humiliating discrimination in the implementation of U.N. resolutions critical of Iraq and Israel. This does not mean that most Arabs fully accept Iraqi behaviour, or totally equate Iraqi and Israeli behaviour. It means that we reject blatant double-standards in implementing U.N. resolutions aimed at promoting security and stability — and also that the legitimate United Nations aims in Iraq can be achieved in a more effective and intelligent manner than the current display of Anglo-American bravado.

This basic grievance against the U.S.-U.K. position is heightened by several others: Washington's, London's

and other Western powers' strategic and economic support of Iraq when it used chemical weapons and fought Iran a decade ago, i.e., selective, self-serving expedience as a defining Western value in dealing with Middle Eastern states; Washington's unilateral expansion and redefinition of resolution 687 to mean that the economic embargo against Iraq will stay in place until Saddam Hussein is out of office; the expressed Anglo-American determination of use force on their own, regardless of the support or opposition of other Security Council members; the apparent failure of the embargo and punitive military strikes to bring about full Iraqi compliance with the weapons inspections regime (if it is true, as the U.S.-U.K.-U.N. claim, that Iraq still hides large stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction); and the enormous, sustained suffering of innocent Iraqi civilians who have no say in their government's actions — suffering rendered even more cruel and barbaric because it does not seem to be leading to a change in the behaviour of the Baghdad government.

A primary difference between Anglo-American and Arab perceptions of Iraq is the wider historical and geographic context in which Iraq's behaviour is assessed. The Anglo-American tendency towards global vigilantism requires that Iraq's real or anticipated threats to others be curtailed immediately, and that Iraq's defiance of Anglo-American-Israeli power be punished so brutally that no other Middle Eastern state would dream of repeating such insubordinate behaviour for centuries. The Arab view, on the other hand, is dominated by the ugly memory of, a) repeated Western military interventions in the Middle East, and, b) hibernation-intensity

Anglo-American enforcement of U.N. resolutions on Palestine and Israel.

Much as the West and Israel would like the Arab World to look at Iraq and forget about Palestine, this will not happen. The sharp divergence today in the Western, Arab and Israeli perceptions of Iraq is a collective tragedy for all concerned. It breeds continued hypocrisy, discrimination, selective implementation of U.N. resolutions, and reckless unilateralism as bedrocks of Anglo-American foreign policy; it encourages Israel to continue to ignore the will of the international community as expressed in U.N. resolutions; and it prompts Arabs and other Middle Easterners to express sympathy and even active support for Iraqi authoritarianism that is a model of the vulgar, violent, and occasionally predatory modern police state.

Another retributive Anglo-American solo attack against Iraq perpetuates rather than tempers these trends. Instead, we should be looking for the following: ways to bring about full Iraqi compliance with the terms of resolution 687, so that any proven Iraqi threats to others can be eliminated; security guarantees for all states in the region, including Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Kuwait, Lebanon and others; a balanced, principled diplomatic effort to implement all unanimously approved U.N. Security Council resolutions; and Western acceptance of the fact that Iraq and Iran have dominated the Gulf region for about the last, oh, five-thousand five-hundred years, and thus that true, lasting security in the Middle East requires a realistic balance of regional powers rather than an intrusive, inconsistent projection of foreign imperial might.

Banning a popular party could spell trouble for Turkey

IF TURKEY'S highest court supposed that it had closed the book when it banned the Islamic-minded Welfare Party on Jan. 16, it reckoned without iftar. Since the day the Constitutional Court delivered its judgement, and ejected Welfare's leader, Necmettin Erbakan, and five of his colleagues from politics for five years, iftar invitations from all over the country have given Mr. Erbakan a platform for defiance in halls jammed with cheering admirers. He is making the most of a breathing-space, for the ban on Welfare and the silencing of its leader do not take legal effect until the court publishes its reasons for the rulings, probably this month.

On the face of it, Mr. Erbakan's rumbustious good humour is hard to explain. His colleagues hope he will be the "guiding hand" of a new party that could pop up to replace Welfare before the month is out. But the country's chief prosecutor, Vural Savas, who brought the case against Welfare says he will not tolerate any party that looks like a Welfare replica. And the guiding hand may soon find itself pinned behind bars. Once expelled from parliament, Mr. Erbakan will lose immunity from prosecution. He could then face charges that include "inciting enmity and hatred through religious and doctrinal differences."

Welfare is no ordinary political party. It provides social services, as well as spiritual sustenance, for millions of conservative peasants and townspeople in Anatolia, Turkey's heartland.

For all that, he seems delighted by his supporters' solidarity in the face of Turkey's generals, the self-appointed guardians of the political system set up by Kemal Ataturk seven decades ago. He is equally pleased by the fact that his opponents may well not be able to take advantage of his dismissal. Last summer the generals had a big hand in overthrowing the flimsy government led by Mr. Erbakan in coalition with Tansu Ciller's True Path Party. But the new government they installed in its place, led by Mesut Yilmaz and his Motherland Party, now looks just as flimsy.

It is possible that the generals have miscalculated in thinking that they can yank religion out of politics by banning Welfare. Mr. Erbakan and his friends reckon that Welfare's ideas remain firmly on the political stage; and they are probably right.

For one thing, most Turks have got used to politics with a religious flavour — partly thanks to the generals themselves. It was, after all, the generals who, in the 1960s and 1970s, decided to put a bit of Islam into politics as an antidote to the Marxism they were then chiefly worrying about. They watched benignly as Suleyman Demirel, now Turkey's president, then its intermittent prime minister, cultivated links with the tarikats, religious brotherhood outlawed by Ataturk, and oversaw the setting up of more than 200 religious schools known as Imam Hatips.

By the early 1990s, some tarikats had got their men into mayors' offices and municipal police forces, and the Imam Hatips, now numbering around 500, were churning out youthful Welfare voters. "The generals," says one historian, "were suddenly confronted by the vast size of the animal they had created." Too late. In the last general election, in 1995, Welfare was the biggest party, winning 21 per cent of the vote. Today it might get as much as a quarter.

Welfare is no ordinary political party. It provides social services, as well as spiritual sustenance, for millions of conservative peasants and townspeople in Anatolia, Turkey's heartland. It gets large amounts of money for such purposes from pious businessmen.

M. KAHIL



her head.

On the day Welfare was banned, another court ruled that Mrs. Ciller had dipped into a fund reserved for national-security purposes, and had spent the money on election expenses. It is not impossible that she will go to jail. If she does, the secularists hope that some members of her party will move over to the government's side. If enough of them did, the combined votes of the two conservative parties (they got 40 per cent between them in 1995) would probably be enough to beat anything Welfare's successor could score.

The trouble with this theory is that some disaffected members of Mrs. Ciller's party may just as easily go over to the new Islamist party. For Mr. Yilmaz is no political magnet. He is an indecisive leader. His minority government has proved weak and ineffective. The economy is shaky, and inflation is rising again; last year it nearly touched 100 per cent. Mr. Yilmaz is begging for further help from the International Monetary Fund, but it is by no means certain he will get it.

Worst of all, weak governments like Mr. Yilmaz's are unlikely to command the courage and the political ingenuity needed to end the 14-year-old war against Kurdish guerrillas in Turkey's south-east. This conflict has killed perhaps 30,000 people; it keeps a quarter of Turkey's 600,000-strong armed forces bogged down in a probably unwinnable war; and it costs money the government would love to spend elsewhere. Nor is the Yilmaz government likely to be strong enough to open the way to a settlement of the Cyprus quarrel by per-

suading the Turkish Cypriots to show enough flexibility to produce a deal with the divided island's Greek Cypriots.

The consequences of all this go deep. The impasse over Cyprus, and the brutality of the war in Turkey's south-east (hundreds of villages razed, great numbers of people made homeless), combine to provide a formidable argument to Europeans who say that Turkey should not be allowed to join the European Union. The banning of Welfare will probably now be added to the anti-Turks' list of objections. Last month the EU humiliatingly put Turkey into a special sub-category of applicants for membership, behind all the others. Turkey was told, in effect, that it had no chance of joining the EU in the foreseeable future.

All this is likely to help the party that follows Welfare. The EU's cold shoulder will persuade many Turks to look for an alternative to Ataturk's old fascination with Europe.

Welfare won lots of votes in the embattled south-east.

... though many Turks still consider Welfare less corrupt than other parties, Mr. Erbakan's prime ministership did not exactly produce the sparkle of decisive government.

And many of the 3 million or so Kurds who left the area in the early 1990s for cities like Istanbul and Ankara have become Welfare sympathisers; the

party helped them to find jobs and houses, and got their names on to the electoral roll. That is why, in 1994, Ankara, Istanbul and many smaller towns elected Welfare mayors, most of whom have scored good marks for honest local government.

It is true that most Turks reject the vicious kind of Islamic revivalism to be found in Afghanistan, Algeria and other places. The Alevis, a big religious sect that numbers up to a quarter of Turkey's population of 62 million, are suspicious of Mr. Erbakan. And though many Turks still consider Welfare less corrupt than other parties, Mr. Erbakan's prime ministership did not exactly produce the sparkle of decisive government.

Unfortunately, neither has Mr. Yilmaz's. The Turkey created by the generals' actions seems to possess no party, and no politician, capable of giving back to the country a sense of unity and purpose.

The Economist

Avoid a tragic legacy

To the editor:

I FELT the need to express my respect and admiration for your editorial stand concerning the lack of Mideast outrage towards the slaughter of children, women and non-combatant men in Algeria. This is an atrocity that only the Arab World can eliminate and it is morally obligated to do so by the dictates of all religions. By definition

LETTERS

the basic foundation of all religion is that there is only one God, one all powerful. If this is truly so then this God is serving all of us no matter how we chose to worship Him. Whatever God may be it must hurt Him deeply to see a holocaust carried out in His name.

Countries that make up the power structure in the world, of which Jordan holds a prominent place, must be responsible for

protecting those who cannot protect themselves no matter what must be done. Cambodia is Asia's failure, Croatia is Europe's, Rwanda is Africa's. The Arab World can prevent itself from living with the legacy of having done nothing while its most innocent died such horrible deaths. In the name of all humanity and our One God the slaughter must be stopped.

Michael Miller
 Northport, Alabama
 USA.

February 3, 1998
mi G. Khouri
ice-off
F.U.N. resolutions in
uld like the Arab World
Palestine, this will not
ay in the Western. The
a collective tragedy, the
hyper-activity, the
U.N. resolution, the
s bedrocks of Arab
rages Israel to continue
national community, a
it prompts Arabs and
ss sympathy and en
anism that is a nat
nally predatory model.
merican who also
in temper, these tend
the following: wars
with the terms of res
qi threats to other
es for all states in
stine, Kuwait, Leban
ed diplomatic effort
proved U.N. Secu
acceptance of the
ed the Gulf region
five-hundred year
ne Middle East
powers rather than
1 of foreign imp
Turkey
y helped them to
s and houses, and
r names on the de
ic toll. That is why
4. Ankara, Istanbul
y smaller town, de
fare majority, and
m have used gov
ks for honest lead
ment.
is true that most
of the violence, and
mic revolution in
in Afghanistan
ria and other pla
Alevis, a big relig
that numbers up
ter of Turkey's pop
of 62 million, is a
ous of Mr. Erdo
though many lab
consider. Well, it
upt than other pla
Erdoğan's prime m
ip did not exactly
the spark of dem
ment.
Unfortunately, ne
Mr. Yilmaz, the
ey created by the
e actions seem to
no party, and pop
capable of giv
to the country a
nity and purpose.
The Economy
ecting those who
protect themselves
ter what must be
e, Cambodia is A
re, Croatia is
ape. The Arab World
prevent itself from
g with the legacy
ing done nothing
ie its most innoc
such horrible de
the name of all
amity and our
the slaughter must
ped.
Michael Miller
Northport, Alabama
USA

Regent: We will not allow use of our airspace against Iraq

(Continued from page 1)

A. The American administration has presented specific proposals to the Israelis and the Palestinians and these proposals aim at giving impetus to the peace process with American commitments that Washington will guarantee the implementation of what has been agreed upon. As we are still at a critical stage, any predictions about the extent of Israeli withdrawal do not serve the ultimate purpose. Political achievement lies in arriving at a treaty that respects the rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine and on Palestinian soil, a treaty that would meet Israel's security requirements. I would like to point out that public opinion here is confused over the implementation of the international legitimacy in the case of Iraq and non-implementation of U.N. resolutions with regard to Israel.

Q. What is Jordan's position vis-a-vis the ongoing developments?

A. A statement by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that she feels that Jordan understands the American position is in my view a recognition of Jordan's assessment of the American stand, not only in 1998 but since 1980. As was referred to in the King's message to me about his conversation with the Iraqi president in August of 1990, before the invasion of Kuwait, I would like to stress that the invasion was a catastrophe because it was a violation of international legitimacy. I would like to point out that Iraq had displayed its opposition towards using Arab weapons against other Arab countries. In fact the King has revealed that situation for the first time, noting that when President Saddam Hussein saw him off at the airport he told him [the King] that the entire universe is against us and God is with us. Victory will be ours so don't worry. We in Jordan do not want Iraq to adopt a position of "and after me the deluge."

Q. People are betting on divisions within the Security Council, what is your view?

A. I believe that Russia and all peace-loving people who care for the Arab souls after all these sufferings and destruction will fight through diplomatic and political means until the last. But I would like to remind you that Primakov, the Russian foreign minister, tried his best in 1990. At the end the U.N. Security Council decided that Iraq should respect the international legitimacy. I hope the Iraqi leadership will not lose the chance of expressing its views to protect its people. The Iraqi foreign minister has explicitly

said that the U.N. inspection team was still working by 90 per cent of its capacity and also there are meetings in Baghdad between international experts to assess the situation. In the light of this I believe there is a chance and there is hope that the crisis will be contained, but if Iraq is adopting the stand of "and after me the deluge" this gives cause for deep concern for this region.

Q. How do you assess the situation now?

A. Once again we are talking about destabilisation in the region, why? Is it about Richard Butler's inspection team's entry into the sensitive Iraqi installations? Does Iraq pride rest on a principled stand that is securing a decent living for the Iraqi people in this manner? We are talking about escalating strikes, which means total devastation. For what reason? For preventing inspectors from visiting the palaces of which there are scores it seems. I would like to point out that Jordan is exposed to danger. For instance if one of the Scud missiles missed, what will happen? Jordan does not have a protection of its skies nor of its vital installations. We of course condemn all forms of armed conflicts. But do we accept to see large numbers of people dying in Jordan?

Q. What are Jordan's measures with regard to the negative effects of a military action on the country?

A. I refer [you] to the 1991 period when 1.5 million refugees of various nationalities converged on Jordan from the Gulf. It is different now. But, God forbid, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis might flee towards Jordan and other neighbouring countries and if this happens it is natural for us to offer them aid. We cannot accept to see our Iraqi brothers exposed in the desert and we cannot accept to see Jordan serving as a home for refugees coming from everywhere. I do hope the U.N. Security Council will through dialogue find a solution. I have to stress that we do not have the capabilities of hosting refugees. Furthermore, we do not have alternatives to the Iraqi oil. If we think of talk about receiving oil from other Arab countries it will take one month to maintain and clean the existing pipeline. Therefore, we have real interest in the containment of the present crisis.

Q. The U.S. defence secretary has said that the airstrikes might not completely destroy Iraq's weapons, do you think the conflict will last for weeks?

A. The U.S. secretary of course based his information on reports from Iraq. The region cannot live through a continual crisis nor can it shoulder the cost. Therefore, I believe that the coming strike will be more devastating than any one before it. On our part

Tarawneh presses on ambassadors need to resolve Iraqi crisis diplomatically

(Continued from page 1)

blow to the economy, disrupting vital fuel supplies and trade exchanges and leading to an influx of Iraqi refugees to the Kingdom.

"We hope that unified Arab and Islamic efforts would be launched to help end the crisis," Dr. Tarawneh said.

Dr. Tarawneh said Russian envoy to Baghdad Viktor Posuvalyuk, who met with Prince Hassan on Sunday en route to Baghdad, is trying to convince Baghdad to "be more flexible in its cooperation with U.N. inspectors."

He said that Turkish Ambassador in Amman Ahmet Suha Umer on Sunday conveyed to him a message from his Turkish counterpart, Ismail Cem, to join him in a proposed visit to Baghdad to solve the deadlock.

"It is up to Turkey to launch such initiative, and we bless such a move," he said. "But we will not join such a trip to Baghdad because we believe in individual efforts rather than individual efforts."

Dr. Tarawneh said "Jordan will intensify contacts not only with Iraq but also with all concerned parties," the minister added.

Turkey on Sunday offered to mediate in the crisis saying the threat of a Western military strike against its neighbour Iraq was imminent.

Iraq accepted the offer Monday, according to Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman, Necati Ukan, adding that Mr. Cem could leave for Baghdad on Tuesday or Wednesday. (See story on page 12)

Dr. Tarawneh reiterated that Jordan will not allow "any party" to use Jordan's territories or airspace to launch attacks on Iraq.

"Jordanian airspace and territories are off limit to all parties. Jordan is not and will not be party to any strike against Iraq and does not support military operations," he told reporters.

The chairman of the House of Arab and International Affairs Committee, Abdullah Jazi, said after the briefing that lawmakers were concerned about developments in Iraq and the possible effects of any attack on Jordan.

"We feel sorry for the suffering of Iraqi people," said Dr. Jazi.

He said the committee urged Dr. Tarawneh to propose the convening of an urgent session of the Arab League foreign ministers to discuss an escalation in tension between Iraq and the United States.

Meanwhile, a French envoy was expected here Monday night en route to Baghdad to deliver a "message" to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein from French President Jacques Chirac, a source at the French embassy said.

The source, who asked not to be named, told the Jordan Times

that the secretary general of the French foreign ministry, Bernard Dufour, who heads a four-team delegation, will carry with him "proposals" to the Iraqi leadership to end the deadlock with Washington.

"The French official will submit proposals to the Iraqi leadership to try and reach a common ground," he said. "And whatever is accomplished will be presented to the U.N. Security Council," the French source said.

"We would like to ask Iraq to comply fully with the Security Council resolutions and to allow U.N. inspectors to enter the off-limits sites," the diplomat said.

"At the same time the inspection committee should respect the dignity and sovereignty of Iraq," he added.

"We do not think that a U.S. strike against Iraq will solve the problem. We believe that there is still room for diplomatic efforts to reach a breakthrough to the crisis," the French source said.

Meanwhile, opposition parties and professional unions said that they will launch a campaign to press the government to "refrain from giving U.S. troops facilities to hit Iraq."

More than 100 participants, representing political parties, professional unions and independent personalities met Monday evening and called for a sit-in in front of the American and British embassies in Amman.

The president of the lawyers association, Hussain Mijah, urged the gathering to support a programme endorsed by the professional unions which includes processions and rallies in different parts of the Kingdom.

The president of the engineers association, Leith Shbeilat, denounced what he described as "Jordan's involvement in U.S. preparations to launch a strike against Iraq."

"The government should announce a clear and unquestionable position that it will not take part in any efforts to hit Iraq and not to grant permission to U.S. troops to be stationed in the Kingdom," Mr. Shbeilat said.

Pan-Arabist Hamad Farhan lashed out at the United States and accused it of double standards in dealing with Middle East problems.

"The U.S. wants to force Iraq to implement U.N. resolutions while it does not do the same with Israel which is violating U.N. resolution every day and night," Mr. Farhan told the gathering.

The participants also proposed sending a delegation to meet Syrian President Hafez Al Assad "to convince him to join Iraq in its confrontation with the United States."

One proposal made at the gathering was to open a register for Jordanian volunteers wishing to fight alongside Iraq.

PNA police, Israeli troops point rifles

(Continued from page 1)

then she was "sick and tired" of hearing them blame each other for their inaction.

Ms. Albright told Mr. Netanyahu the Americans had succeeded in reducing Palestinian expectations, but that Israel's refusal to give up more land in a promised West Bank withdrawal was the core of the problem, the Yediot Achronot newspaper said.

Mr. Netanyahu told a cheering audience of American Orthodox Jews on Sunday night that "on matters that relate to our very survival — it is Israel and Israel alone that makes the decisions."

Mr. Netanyahu, assessing his talks with Ms. Albright, said there were still "substantial gaps" and that there was no agreement on the extent of Israel's overdue West Bank withdrawal.

"I think we've made some progress, but I wouldn't overstate it," he said.

Monday's clashes in Bethlehem were the fourth day in a row that violence has broken out in the West Bank town, Palestinian police crouched in firing position when Israeli soldiers pursued stone-throwers into Palestinian-controlled territory. The soldiers retreated, firing tear gas toward the stone-throwers and police as they went.

Ms. Albright said Sunday that Washington would prefer a diplomatic solution to the crisis but would not hesitate to use force if Baghdad continues to deny access to U.N. weapons inspectors.

Saudi Arabia has been reluctant to allow the United States to use its bases in the past and does not support a military strike against Iraq in the current crisis, according to Arab diplomatic sources.

"She left the meeting feeling well satisfied that she had the 100 per cent support of Kuwait," U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin said.

"The bottom line is, when push comes to shove, the emir of Kuwait made clear that if force is the last resort, he will support us," the official said.

Meanwhile, international missile and chemical weapons experts met Iraqi government officials in Baghdad on Monday for talks Iraq hopes can offset U.N. demands for access to its "presidential sites."

A U.N. official said two separate sessions of talks began at 10 a.m. local time to assess Iraq's progress in dismantling prohibited warheads and chemical weapons programmes.

He said missile inspector Nikita Smidovich of Russia led the U.N. delegation discussing special missile warheads, capable of carrying biological and chemical payloads. Horst Reeps of Germany led the U.N. side for talks on chemical weapons, focusing on the deadly nerve agent VX.

Iraq hopes the talks, expected to last around five days, will show it has accounted for its banned weapons of mass destruction and make the U.N. demands for access unnecessary.

UNSCOM officials have said 45 of the special warheads remain unaccounted for, though they believe some of them have been destroyed. Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Saad Al Sahaf said on Sunday Iraq could prove all 45 warheads were destroyed.

"We will tell the world: 'Your allegations are baseless. You said 45 warheads. Well, these are the remnants. Come and check them. These are the remnants of the 45,'" he said.

"The allegation that there is a need to go to a sovereign site can be answered through this technical, professional verification," he said.

on the part of the Palestinian Authority before any territory is relinquished."

Israel's cabinet has demanded the Palestinians meet a series of conditions, most related to security, before Israel withdraws from any further territory.

Ms. Albright faces a dilemma: she needs concessions from Mr. Netanyahu to rally the Arab World behind the U.S. position against Iraq, but she needs Palestinian concessions to persuade Mr. Netanyahu to give ground.

Israeli Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh said Sunday that it would be a mistake for the Americans to pressure Israel. "It would only lead to stalemate, to needless tensions between Israel and the American administration and I don't think that's in the interest of the Americans," he said.

President Arafat emerged silent and solemn after two hours of talks Sunday with Ms. Albright in the West Bank town of Ramallah. Heading into the meeting, the two shook hands once for still photographers, but declined to repeat the gesture for TV cameras.

Ms. Albright said the two sides had agreed to send envoys to Washington this week to try to break the year-long impasse in the peace process.

The PLO executive committee met Saturday night to address a key Israeli demand — that the Palestinians revoke clauses of their national charter calling for Israel's destruction.

But a statement by the official Palestinian news agency WAFA — and accounts by several officials present — said the executive committee had merely been shown a letter from President Arafat to U.S. President Bill Clinton saying the Palestinians renounced those clauses.

The Palestinians contend the clauses were effectively cancelled in 1996 by the Palestinian National Council (PNC), the Palestinian parliament-in-exile. But Israel says the Palestinians never followed up on that vote. Mr. Netanyahu said that if Saturday night's action was meant to prepare Palestinian public opinion for the formal nullification of the charter — "then it's a positive step."

But he said the charter must be formally nullified by the PNC.

Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo, a member of the PNC, rejected that demand.

"We think the issue of the charter is closed," he said. "It's a game played by Mr. Netanyahu... and we are not obliged to run after his games."

Albright rallies support for military strikes in Gulf

(Continued from page 1)

Gulf, have warned that the time for diplomacy is running out. Russia, which is opposed to the use of force against Baghdad, has called for more patience.

Mr. Viktor Posuvalyuk held talks with Mr. Aziz on a diplomatic solution to Baghdad's row with the United Nations over weapons inspections, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) said on Monday.

But no details of what was discussed at the meeting was available.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright met Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz in Riyadh Monday to try to win the support of the kingdom for the U.S. stance in the crisis with Iraq.

Ms. Albright, who secured the backing of Kuwait during a visit to the emirate on Sunday, is scheduled to head for Bahrain, the last stop of her Gulf tour.

Speaking to reporters Monday on the flight from Kuwait City to Riyadh, Ms. Albright denied suggestions the United States was having difficulty winning over Arab governments to its position.

"That's not true. That's

really not so," she said.

Ms. Albright said Sunday that Washington would prefer a diplomatic solution to the crisis but would not hesitate to use force if Baghdad continues to deny access to U.N. weapons inspectors.

Saudi Arabia has been reluctant to allow the United States to use its bases in the past and does not support a military strike against Iraq in the current crisis, according to Arab diplomatic sources.

"She left the meeting feeling well satisfied that she had the 100 per cent support of Kuwait," U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin said.

"The bottom line is, when push comes to shove, the emir of Kuwait made clear that if force is the last resort, he will support us," the official said.

Meanwhile, international missile and chemical weapons experts met Iraqi government officials in Baghdad on Monday for talks Iraq hopes can offset U.N. demands for access to its "presidential sites."

A U.N. official said two separate sessions of talks began at 10 a.m. local time to assess Iraq's progress in dismantling prohibited warheads and chemical weapons programmes.

He said missile inspector Nikita Smidovich of Russia led the U.N. delegation discussing special missile warheads, capable of carrying biological and chemical payloads. Horst Reeps of Germany led the U.N. side for talks on chemical weapons, focusing on the deadly nerve agent VX.

Iraq hopes the talks, expected to last around five days, will show it has accounted for its banned weapons of mass destruction and make the U.N. demands for access unnecessary.

UNSCOM officials have said 45 of the special warheads remain unaccounted for, though they believe some of them have been destroyed. Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Saad Al Sahaf said on Sunday Iraq could prove all 45 warheads were destroyed.

"We will tell the world: 'Your allegations are baseless. You said 45 warheads. Well, these are the remnants. Come and check them. These are the remnants of the 45,'" he said.

"The allegation that there is a need to go to a sovereign site can be answered through this technical, professional verification," he said.

UNSCOM says it has also been unable to account for ingredients or precursors that could produce tonnes of VX gas, saying they were dumped in the desert.

But the biggest gaps in accounting for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction lie in its biological weapons programme, chief U.N. weapons inspector, Richard Butler, has said. Talks on biological weapons are expected later this month.

Iraq says it has no biological, chemical or nuclear weapons and no missiles with a range of 150 km. It says it has already given UNSCOM all the information, documents and material in its possession related to its weapons programmes.

This week's talks include outside experts for the first time. They were drafted in to address Iraqi complaints that UNSCOM is a hostile body committed to prolonging its work and extend sanctions on Iraq.

But the teams are still led by UNSCOM members and Mr. Butler expressed doubts last month they would issue a more positive report than previous UNSCOM missions.

House committee inclined to return temporary press law to government

(Continued from page 1)

the High Court of Justice and because Parliament cannot discuss an unconstitutional law," said NGC member Mahmoud Kharabshah.

The future course of the amended law, however, is expected to be the focus of discussion when the Lower House meets on Wednesday, its first session since the High Court ruled on Jan. 26 that the revisions, introduced last May while Parliament was in recess, were unconstitutional.

The surprise decision by the country's Supreme Court divided the Cabinet, according to official sources.

Some ministers suggested that the Cabinet should resign while others said the government, which respected the separation of powers, should fight the move through legal means since the court did not rule on the contents of the law itself.

The eight-day-old ruling

annulled the decree issued last May which forced 13 of Jordan's 20 weeklies to close down, by tightening curbs on reporting, imposing stiffer fines on offenders and introducing prohibitive capital requirements.

The High Court said the introduction of a temporary law was unconstitutional since there was no state of emergency or necessitating circumstances for the government to change the law.

"The High Court has the right to look into a case filed by a party that was harmed by the introduction of a temporary law," said one government official.

"But it has no right to decide whether the government's move was constitutional or not," he said.

Hence, the government would appeal before the Higher Council to see whether the High Court had the right to interpret the Constitution.

Or it would go to the Court of Cassation, which she said, can act as a constitutional court, if it wants to contest the decision that the government's move was unconstitutional.

Minister of Information Samir Mutawi yesterday said the ruling did not nullify government decisions taken under the amended law, including the revocation of the weeklies' licences.

"Those newspapers that did not meet the requirements for licensing under the temporary law and which stopped publishing cannot publish now unless they obtain a new licence under the provisions of the 1993 Press and Publications Law," Dr. Mutawi was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying.

He said "the government will duly respect all decisions taken by the judiciary," noting that "the government has not yet been officially notified and when notification comes through proper channels the Council of Ministers will then determine the appropriate mechanism for its implementation."

Dr. Mutawi stated that his ministry had obtained a legal opinion according to which the High Court of Justice's verdict is not retroactive, "which means that it does not apply to the period before the verdict was issued. And therefore the measures and decisions taken before the court's verdict are legal and legitimate."

The government in May went out of its way to defend the amendments against fierce opposition at home and abroad, saying they were needed to ensure that journalists would act responsibly in the service of the country.

Most of the opposition parties, including the powerful Muslim Brotherhood, boycotted last November's parliamentary elections, partly in protest at the press law, described by one U.S.-based rights group as placing free expression "under siege."

Jordan, European Community sign 'framework convention' to execute financial and technical cooperation

By Ghaila Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and the European Community Monday signed a "framework convention" to govern the implementation of financial and technical cooperation under the MEDA programme.

The scheme is the community's main financial instrument launched in 1996, a year after the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership at the Barcelona Conference. The programme replaced the traditional

financial protocols under which projects worth 329 million European Currency Units or ECUs (about \$361 million), were implemented in Jordan since it signed a cooperation agreement with the European Union (EU) in 1997.

Monday's agreement included the legal and administrative framework for the implementation of support measures and projects financed by the Community and the European Investment Bank (EIB).

"This framework con-

vention rules the relationship between the European Union and Jordan... It is a legal document with considerable amount of technical provisions," Deputy Director General of the European Commission's (EC's) External Relations, Santiago Gomez-Reino, said.

He was speaking after signing the deal with Planning Ministry Secretary General, Nabil Ammari.

The MEDA programme, which allocated 4.9 billion ECUs (about \$5.3 billion) to



Planning Secretary-General Nabil Ammari (right) and Mr. Reino sign the documents of the 'framework convention'

Europe's 12 Mediterranean partners between 1996-1999, aims at encouraging and supporting the reform of economic and social structures in the region to prepare for the creation of the world's largest free zone area by the year 2010.

Mr. Reino said similar agreements will be concluded with all the EC's Mediterranean partners to assist them in implementing vital programmes in the future.

"We will complete this exercise with all Mediterranean countries before the end of February. It is important, because without setting general rules we cannot implement financial cooperation," he said.

Agreements were signed with Morocco, Tunisia and the Palestinian National Authority running Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank under a 1993 peace deal with Israel.

Other partners include Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey, Cyprus, Malta, Israel and Algeria.

The EC granted Jordan a total of 100 mil-

lion ECUs (about \$110 million) in 1996 and 1997 to support its economic reform programme.

Jordan also received seven million ECUs (about \$7.7 million) for the establishment of a Business Service Centre, expected to start operating next month, according to the head of the EC Delegation in Jordan, Yves Gazzo.

He told reporters that the centre is intended to assist local companies to penetrate European markets and improve the balance of trade which has for long been in favour of Europe.

Jordan and the European Union signed a partnership agreement in November to establish a gradual free trade area by the year 2010.

The EIB also provided \$10 million ECUs (about 11 million) risk capital to support small and medium-size enterprises during the same period.

In response to His Majesty King Hussein's request last year for special aid, an extra 10 million ECUs (about \$11 million) were pro-

vided in support of Jordan's food security, the Middle East Peace Process and humanitarian needs, Mr. Reino said.

The EIB also provided Jordan with 110 million ECUs (about \$121 million) in loans in 1997, he added.

"Jordan has been receiving more money per capita than any other country in the region because of its good administration and its capacity to quickly implement financed projects," Mr. Reino stressed.

Since the signing of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel in October 1994, the Kingdom received a total of 873 million ECUs (about \$1 billion) in grants from the EU — the region's major financial contributor.

Mr. Reino said Jordan and the EU were close to concluding discussions on identifying key sectors in which the European Union could extend its financial and technical assistance to Jordan.

A European delegation visited Jordan in December for talks on ways to assist Amman in choosing industrial sectors "with high value added."

The European officials then stressed the importance of identifying the potential sectors for development in order to utilise the European financial aid for 1999 in the most efficient manner.

The European financial aid to Jordan for 1999 has not yet been announced.

Royal Club Restaurant



Featuring a breathtaking view of Amman from our Top Floor, we welcome you daily from 7:00 - 11:00pm (closed on Fridays)

Radisson SAS
HOTEL AMMAN

The difference is genuine.™

Experience NEW delights of fine, innovative European cuisine!

Executive Chef, Knud Bundgaard proudly presents from the menu:

Spinach and Ricotta ravioli in tomato cream • Bisque of Spanish mussels • Grilled veal escalopes with apples and Calvados sauce... accompanied by an exciting selection of wines, digestives and cigars (detailed menu is available upon request).

Royal Club Restaurant - Top Floor - Radisson SAS Hotel Amman (Former Philadelphia Hotel)
Reservations recommended - Direct Tel: 06 5607200 - Fax: 06 5665160

AL-Faiha for Engineering Products

Please be advised that the telephone and fax numbers of the company have been changed as of 1/2/1998 as follows:-

	Old Numbers	New Numbers
Telephone No	606982	5606982
Fax No	681481	5681481

GRACE CORMIX TREMCO

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Scatters seed
- Walk back and forth
- Swarms (with)
- Decide not to include
- Stun
- Mr. Deeto of "Star Wars"
- "Cavallera Rusticana" lady
- Man or Wight, e.g.
- Get on
- Loose pasta
- End-table item
- Fish eggs
- Classy neckwear
- Most glaring
- River to the Gulf of Lions
- Advance
- David's general
- Loose tin
- Individual
- Coffee shop
- Foot one's own
- Outlaw
- Small woods
- Debit's color
- Persian ruler
- Loose
- climbers
- "The Planets" composer
- Golf shop
- giveaway
- Flushing stadium
- Table-setting woman
- Record
- Turn soil
- "Susan" movie
- "Troy Donahue"
- Food scraps
- Flat fish

DOWN

- Do it alone
- Herman
- Melville's "Typee" sequel
- Unrestrained
- "Rocky" man
- Spectrum makers
- Fabric of yore
- Veal source
- Garden of
- Forbidden acids
- Becomes a gully
- Latin list-ender
- Extra
- Makes an instant lawn
- Consumed
- University of Maine location
- Zeal
- Glinted
- Deceive
- Faux pas
- Eastern staple
- Sewing-machine inventor Howe
- Significance
- Examines
- Stimulate
- WWII vessel
- Scholarly thinkers
- Completely obliterated
- Gradual
- Picks
- Sacked out
- Resistance units
- Fossil fuel
- Isle of exile
- Director
- Preminger
- Apprehension
- Neighbor of Kentucky
- Jodie Foster film
- Business transaction

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is a good day to ask for a raise. If you're selling something, you might be able to increase your prices. Tonight will be good for romance. Go along with your sweetheart's wishes on anything having to do with finances and you'll get along great.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) An older person wants you to do something in which you have no interest. If this person signs your paychecks, you may have to comply. Maybe you just don't understand the order. Ask for clarification until you do. That's also a good way to get your objections across.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You feel as if somebody's looking over your shoulder, trying to figure out what you're up to and whether it's what you're supposed to be doing. At any rate, today you're going to have to play the game pretty close to the vest. Somebody is definitely watching.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You want to buy something expensive, but your partner wants something different, and he or she has a bigger bargaining chip. Don't fret. Get somebody to show how the other person's idea is ridiculous. You do have to protect your own interests, you know.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Everything you suggest will run into obstacles. Someone will think of one reason that won't work, and somebody else will think of another. Just at this day as one for finding the problems and you won't be dismayed when they pop up.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) A job you're working on doesn't fall together quite right, but at least you know what you're up against. You've got several more obstacles to overcome. You're actually very lucky right now, and have good practical common sense. So, just take them one at a time.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You can have what you want, if you're willing to keep up with the payments. The problems is that you and your sweetheart can't agree on what to buy. Go ahead and hassle it out. You'll gain a better understanding of each other. And you'll make a wiser purchase than you would have otherwise.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) If you and your business partner are talking about real estate, this is an excellent time to make your decision. There are a zillion variables to consider. Look at each one, but don't get bogged down in details. Keep your objective in mind and the decision-making process will be easier.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) It's a good thing you're in a scholarly mood. There's a big job facing you, and no way around it. It'll be most annoying first thing this morning. Then again, in the afternoon, you may experience a flare-up. Tonight there's another breakdown, but there's good news. It looks like you get the problem solved before you go to bed.

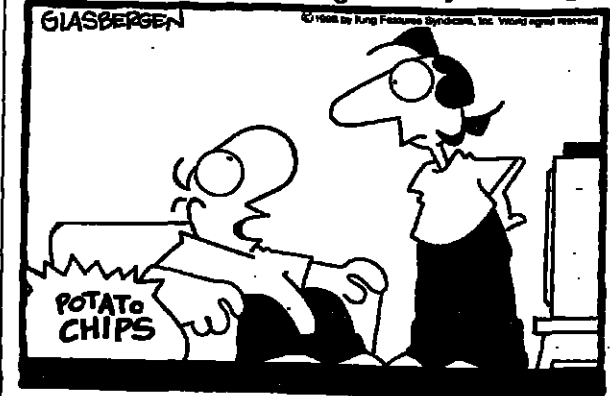
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) It's easier for you to express your love today. That's something you may not do very comfortably with words. It's easier to give gifts. And hugs are a good way to say things you can't find the words. Actually, they're a good way to say things whether you can find the words or not.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You're about to make a decision regarding a domestic matter. Maybe you've even made up a list with the good things on one side and the bad things on the other. The only trouble is, such lists don't take miracles into account. Better make another column for that.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You've got a puzzle to solve today, and you can't seem to think your way out of a paper bag. You're bogged down in details, and it's making the job harder. Go ahead and ask questions, and take careful notes. As you pay attention, the information will sink in.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

YORFE

GOUNY

NIFTIE

TREVIN

Print answer here: A

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: FLAME WHEEL ENSIGN MEASLY
Answer: What he made when he assumed an alias — A NAME FOR HIMSELF

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Another crisis in the region seen harming industries, businesses in Jordan

AMMAN — A possible U.S. military strike against Iraq will bring negative impacts on the Kingdom's economy, especially the industrial sector, economists and businessmen said Monday.

"Iraq is the major market that absorbs Jordanian commodities," said a businessman who asked not to be named.

"If any political instability occurs in Iraq the whole region, especially Jordan, will be affected," the businessman told the Jordan Times.

The businessman was responding to speculation that erupted following U.S. threats to hit Iraq if Baghdad did not cooperate fully with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of inspecting Iraq's mass destruction weapons.

U.S. officials demanded Iraq to allow U.N. monitors to enter presidential palaces which Iraq rejected as "infringement to its sovereignty."

Jordanian officials fear that any strike against Iraq will affect Jordan's oil imports which amount to more than \$500 million a year.

The well-known economic analyst Fahd Faneek said that if the United States carried its threats against Jordan's eastern neighbour, the Kingdom's oil imports will be affected.

"If such a strike occurs we might lose \$600 million in exports to the Iraqi market which accounts to 15 per cent of the Kingdom's foreign trade," Dr. Faneek said.

"The indirect impact will be that some companies in Jordan will be declared bankrupt if the standoff continues," Dr. Faneek added.

"This means that many workers will lose their jobs and this will add more difficulties to our economy and will increase the number of unemployed," he added.

Dr. Faneek said that if oil imports from Iraq were stopped following a would-be strike, "this means that Jordan has to look for another market which will not give Jordan the same prices it currently receives from its eastern neighbour."

Last year, Jordan and Iraq renewed an oil agreement which amounts to \$550 million a year and stipulates supplying Jordan with oil and oil derivatives at discount rates.

Head of Jordan's Chamber of Commerce, Haider Murad, said that the negative impact will hit all sectors in the country, especially the industrial sector.

"God willing, the strike will not happen because if it occurs, this will add more burdens to the economy which is already under recession," said Mr. Murad.

He said that Jordan's exports of medicine and other humanitarian aid, which amount to more than \$255 million a year, will be damaged.

Naim Naqeeb, a broker at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) said that if the crisis between Iraq and the United States continues, the prices of shares will decline further.

"People will not buy shares if the instability continues and prices of companies' shares will decrease, especially the industrial firms," Mr. Naqeeb said.

"Most of the companies that are registered in the market have ties with the Iraqi market and these firms will be the most to suffer," he added.

"Not only the stock market but also the economy as a whole will be damaged if this crisis continues," added the broker.

"If no solution was reached between Iraq and the United States, recession will prevail at the stock market in particular and the economy as a whole," Mr. Naqeeb emphasised.

Meanwhile, turnover at the AFM has declined last week apparently as a result of U.S. threats to Iraq, brokers said.

The daily AFM report showed that the total turnover amounted to JD2.9 million down from JD4.6 million a week ago, or 37 per cent decrease.

The share price index has jumped to 166.8 point up from 165.1 points, or 1.71 point increase.

Out of the 79 companies that changed hands during the last week's dealing, 18 witnessed an increase in its prices, shares of 39 firms witnessed decline while 22 firms witnessed no change in its prices.

Economists, businessmen expect U.S. strike on Iraq to deal major blow to Jordan economy

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A possible U.S. military strike against Iraq will bring negative impacts on the Kingdom's economy, especially the industrial sector, economists and businessmen said Monday.

"Iraq is the major market that absorbs Jordanian commodities," said a businessman who asked not to be named.

"If any political instability occurs in Iraq the whole region, especially Jordan, will be affected," the businessman told the Jordan Times.

The businessman was responding to speculation that erupted following U.S. threats to hit Iraq if Baghdad did not cooperate fully with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of inspecting Iraq's mass destruction weapons.

U.S. officials demanded Iraq to allow U.N. monitors to enter presidential palaces which Iraq rejected as "infringement to its sovereignty."

Jordanian officials fear that any strike against Iraq will affect Jordan's oil imports which amount to more than \$500 million a year.

The well-known economic analyst Fahd Faneek said that if the United States carried its threats against Jordan's eastern neighbour, the Kingdom's oil imports will be affected.

"If such a strike occurs we might lose \$600 million in exports to the Iraqi market which accounts to 15 per cent of the Kingdom's foreign trade," Dr. Faneek said.

"The indirect impact will be that some companies in Jordan will be declared bankrupt if the standoff continues," Dr. Faneek added.

"This means that many workers will lose their jobs and this will add more difficulties to our economy and will increase the number of unemployed," he added.

Dr. Faneek said that if oil imports from Iraq were stopped following a would-be strike, "this means that Jordan has to look for another market which will not give Jordan the same prices it currently receives from its eastern neighbour."

Last year, Jordan and Iraq renewed an oil agreement which amounts to \$550 million a year and stipulates supplying Jordan with oil and oil derivatives at discount rates.

Head of Jordan's Chamber of Commerce, Haider Murad, said that the negative impact will hit all sectors in the country, especially the industrial sector.

"God willing, the strike will not happen because if it occurs, this will add more burdens to the economy which is already under recession," said Mr. Murad.

He said that Jordan's exports of medicine and other humanitarian aid, which amount to more than \$255 million a year, will be damaged.

Naim Naqeeb, a broker at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) said that if the crisis between Iraq and the United States continues, the prices of shares will decline further.

"People will not buy shares if the instability continues and prices of companies' shares will decrease, especially the industrial firms," Mr. Naqeeb said.

"Most of the companies that are registered in the market have ties with the Iraqi market and these firms will be the most to suffer," he added.

"Not only the stock market but also the economy as a whole will be damaged if this crisis continues," added the broker.

"If no solution was reached between Iraq and the United States, recession will prevail at the stock market in particular and the economy as a whole," Mr. Naqeeb emphasised.

Meanwhile, turnover at the AFM has declined last week apparently as a result of U.S. threats to Iraq, brokers said.

The daily AFM report showed that the total turnover amounted to JD2.9 million down from JD4.6 million a week ago, or 37 per cent decrease.

The share price index has jumped to 166.8 point up from 165.1 points, or 1.71 point increase.

Out of the 79 companies that changed hands during the last week's dealing, 18 witnessed an increase in its prices, shares of 39 firms witnessed decline while 22 firms witnessed no change in its prices.

Mr. Darwazah indicated that Jordan's role is originally limited with regard to the oil-for-food pact "because Iraq deals directly with the countries of origin when importing grains."

Mazen Darwazah, the general manager of Al Hikma Pharmaceutical Company, expects the economic situation in Jordan to suffer from a total paralysis if no diplomatic solution is found to the crisis. Noting that a paralysed industrial structure in Iraq will affect Iraqi oil supplies to Jordan, Mr. Darwazah said that in general "Jordan will be one of the countries that will be harmed should an imbalance or crisis erupt in the region."

"The economic situation in Jordan is in a noticeable retreat at present along with the retreat in the peace process and the inability to achieve the aspired goals from peace. So what will be the situation if a crisis like the Gulf war erupts," he elaborated.

He saw a limited impact on the pharmaceutical industries because, over the past years, they were able to widen the export base to more than 32 countries. Yet, he said, Iraq is an important part to the Jordanian economy and Jordanian industries will do their utmost to relieve the suffering of the Iraqi people (Al Dustour).

Mr. Darwazah said there are sufficient quantities of supplies in the market and that the private sector has "good" stocks of both sugar and rice. Asked about the general conditions for our trade with Iraq, Mr. Darwazah said that in general "Jordan will be one of the countries that will be harmed should an imbalance or crisis erupt in the region."

"The economic situation in Jordan is in a noticeable retreat at present along with the retreat in the peace process and the inability to achieve the aspired goals from peace. So what will be the situation if a crisis like the Gulf war erupts," he elaborated.

He saw a limited impact on the pharmaceutical industries because, over the past years, they were able to widen the export base to more than 32 countries. Yet, he said, Iraq is an important part to the Jordanian economy and Jordanian industries will do their utmost to relieve the suffering of the Iraqi people (Al Dustour).

Mr. Darwazah said there are sufficient quantities of supplies in the market and that the private sector has "good" stocks of both sugar and rice. Asked about the general conditions for our trade with Iraq, Mr. Darwazah said that in general "Jordan will be one of the countries that will be harmed should an imbalance or crisis erupt in the region."

"The economic situation in Jordan is in a noticeable retreat at present along with the retreat in the peace process and the inability to achieve the aspired goals from peace. So what will be the situation if a crisis like the Gulf war erupts," he elaborated.

He saw a limited impact on the pharmaceutical industries because, over the past years, they were able to widen the export base to more than 32 countries. Yet, he said, Iraq is an important part to the Jordanian economy and Jordanian industries will do their utmost to relieve the suffering of the Iraqi people (Al Dustour).

Mr. Darwazah said there are sufficient quantities of supplies in the market and that the private sector has "good" stocks of both sugar and rice. Asked about the general conditions for our trade with Iraq, Mr. Darwazah said that in general "Jordan will be one of the countries that will be harmed should an imbalance or crisis erupt in the region."

"The economic situation in Jordan is in a noticeable retreat at present along with the retreat in the peace process and the inability to achieve the aspired goals from peace. So what will be the situation if a crisis like the Gulf war erupts," he elaborated.

He saw a limited impact on the pharmaceutical industries because, over the past years, they were able to widen the export base to more than 32 countries. Yet, he said, Iraq is an important part to the Jordanian economy and Jordanian industries will do their utmost to relieve the suffering of the Iraqi people (Al Dustour).

Mr. Darwazah said there are sufficient quantities of supplies in the market and that the private sector has "good" stocks of both sugar and rice. Asked about the general conditions for our trade with Iraq, Mr. Darwazah said that in general "Jordan will be one of the countries that will be harmed should an imbalance or crisis erupt in the region."

"The economic situation in Jordan is in a noticeable retreat at present along with the retreat in the peace process and the inability to achieve the aspired goals from peace. So what will be the situation if a crisis like the Gulf war erupts," he elaborated.

He saw a limited impact on the pharmaceutical industries because, over the past years, they were able to widen the export base to more than 32 countries. Yet, he said, Iraq is an important part to the Jordanian economy and Jordanian industries will do their utmost to relieve the suffering of the Iraqi people (Al Dustour).

OPE
EUBRARY 3, 1998
edia Services, Inc.

is a good day to be...
ing, you might be...
I be good for...
shes on anything...
long great.

older person want...
no interest. If this...
may have to compl...
order. As for clanc...
way to get your obje...

u feel as if someb...
figure out what you...
opposed to be doing...
to play the game p...
infinitely waiting

I want to buy some...
something different...
chip. Don't let be...
person's idea is inde...
wn interests. You kno...

thing you suggest...
think of one reason...
I think of another...
blems and you won't...

22) A job you re...
right, but at least...
you've got several...
really very lucky...
non sense. So, just...

22) You can have...
up with the person...
sweetheart can't...
le it out. You'll...
And you'll make a...
wise.

ber 21) If you and...
real estate, this...
ation. There are a...
ach one, but don't...
r objective in mind...
e easier.

to December 21) I...
need. There's a bi...
n. In the afternoon...
it there's another...
ks like you get the...

January 20) It's eas...
at's something you...
s. It's easier to give...
things you can't find...
y to say things whe...

ary 19) You're abo...
domestic matter. Ma...
good things on one...
le only trouble is...
mt. Better make an...

By Glasbergen

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 2/2/98 18:57

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.8244	0.8118	1.4775	126.83	1.4525	1798.90	2.0653	6.1086	
DE Mark	0.5481	1.0000	0.8099	69.56	0.7958	986.08	1.1258	3.3492	
GB Sterling	1.6346	2.9829	1.0000	2.4162	207.35	2.3743	2940.12	3.3892	9.8639
CH Franc	0.6768	123.50	0.4139	1.0000	86.79	0.8817	1217.20	138.11	4.1359
JP Yen	0.0079	1.4377	0.4822	1.1647	1.0000	1.1447	14.19	162.00	4.8185
CA Dollar	0.6895	1.2837	0.4228	1.0227	1.14	12.48	1.4245	4.2360	
IT Lira	0.0005	1.0140	0.3399	0.0821	1421.06	0.8069	11.42	3.3967	
NL Guilder	0.4865	88.71	0.2976	71.89	61.66	0.7066	876.49	2.9736	
FR Franc	0.1637	0.2983	0.1001	24.1654	20.72	0.2375	33.62	33.6200	

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7505	0.3770	3.6395	0.3055	3.6727	1629.50	3.3850
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2898	0.5317	5.1333	0.4309	5.1801	2157.28	4.7884
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	1.0000	0.1005	0.97	0.0816	0.98	407.81	0.9052
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8807	9.9485	1.0000	9.65	0.8104	9.74	4057.14	3.0055
Qatar Dinar	0.2748	0.1948	1.0305	1.0305	1.0000	0.0839	1.01	420.26	0.9328
Kuwait Dinar	3.2733	2.3208	12.2766	1.2340	11.91	1.02	12.02	6006.65	0.9328
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0256	0.9910	0.0832	1.01	415.45	0.9244
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4636	2.4521	0.2485	2.3795	0.1997	2.4012	2.2197	
Egyptian	0.2946	0.2088	1.1047	0.1110	1.0720	0.0900	1.0818	450.52	

Energy

Oil's	Last	Previous
Brent	15.34	15.72
W. Texas	15.34	15.72
Bonny	15.34	15.72
Dubai	13.77	14.28
UL Gas	160.00	161.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4866	0.1634	0.38451	3.3806
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4862	0.16659	0.40287	3.6471
KW Dinar	3.2733	5.97372	2.0028	4.84262	416.282
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.84027	1.62311	3.92465	336.587
CY Pound	1.8642	3.4005	1.1397	2.7658	236.398

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	301.76	302.25
Silver (oz's)	6.29	6.31
Platinum (oz's)	388.5	390.5
AL (3 Months)	1532	1534
CU (3 Months)	1761	1762
Zinc (3 Months)	1120	1123
Lead (3 Months)	533	534
NI (3 Months)	5510	5520

Energy

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	179.08	Spot
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1694	Spot
Sugar (\$/ton)	297	Spot
Wheat (\$/ton)	0	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	25.04	Spot
Tea (kg/kg)	225	Spot
Barley (\$/bsh)	400	Spot
Rice (\$/ton)	400	Spot

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

New Islamic Bank to start operations Monday

By Abdul Salam Gharneibeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Arab Islamic International Bank will be operating as of next Monday, according to the bank's General Manager Jamil Dusuqi.

Mr. Dusuqi said that the bank will for the time being operate four branches at the Wasfi Tell Street (Gardens), Downtown Amman, Wihdat and Irbid.

Mr. Dusuqi indicated that the bank will extend loans in accordance with Islamic Sharia.

"We expect our bank to compete with other banks and thus upgrade the level of banking services extended to the clients," said Mr. Dusuqi.

He added that the bank's capital totals JD40 million making it the fourth bank in terms of capital in the Kingdom.

Mr. Dusuqi said the bank has employed highly qualified bankers and that the number stands now at 110 employees.

"This number is expected to rise this year to 150 after new branches are opened in other parts of the Kingdom," said Mr. Dusuqi.

Mr. Dusuqi said the bank has employed highly qualified bankers and that the number stands now at 110 employees.

"This number is expected to rise this year to 150 after new branches are opened in other parts of the Kingdom," said Mr. Dusuqi.

Mr. Dusuqi said the bank has employed highly qualified bankers and that the number stands now at 110 employees.

"This number is expected to rise this year to 150 after new branches are opened in other parts of the Kingdom," said Mr. Dusuqi.

Analysts: U.N. proposal for Iraqi oil sales hurts prices, impractical

LONDON (AFP) — Oil industry analysts here criticised on Monday a proposal by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to allow a big increase in Iraqi oil sales as damaging to oil prices and impractical.

Oil prices plunged Monday following Mr. Annan's recommendation that Iraq be allowed to increase exports in an oil-for-food programme to \$5.2 billion worth from \$2 billion for each six-month period.

The revenues are meant to allow Iraq to overcome crippling poverty caused by U.N. sanctions imposed in 1990 after Baghdad's invasion of neighbouring Kuwait.

In London, the benchmark Brent North Sea oil price traded at \$15.67 a barrel, down from \$15.96 late Friday on the International Petroleum Exchange.

Oil prices are already being kept down by the OPEC cartel's decision to boost production this year by 10 per cent to 27.5 million barrels a day, and a drop in demand due to the Asian economic and financial crisis.

A further flood of oil on the market would hit prices even harder, traders said.

"It is enormous. The market expected not more than a 50 per cent rise to three billion dollars," said Medhi Varzi, an oil expert at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson.

"That figure seems excessive. Were it to be approved by the Security Council, it would be the worst thing you could think of for the oil market," said Leo Drollas, an expert at the Centre for Global Energy Studies think-tank.

Quite apart from investors' fears of a price plunge, experts believe Iraq would have trouble in the short-term of increasing its export capacity by such a margin. The infrastructure is already in poor condition and there is the possibility of new U.S. and British bombing.

LONDON (AFP) — Oil industry analysts here criticised on Monday a proposal by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to allow a big increase in Iraqi oil sales as damaging to oil prices and impractical.

Oil prices plunged Monday following Mr. Annan's recommendation that Iraq be allowed to increase exports in an oil-for-food programme to \$5.2 billion worth from \$2 billion for each six-month period.

The revenues are meant to allow Iraq to overcome crippling poverty caused by U.N. sanctions imposed in 1990 after Baghdad's invasion of neighbouring Kuwait.

In London, the benchmark Brent North Sea oil price traded at \$15.67 a barrel, down from \$15.96 late Friday on the International Petroleum Exchange.

Oil prices are already being kept down by the OPEC cartel's decision to boost production this year by 10 per cent to 27.5 million barrels a day, and a drop in demand due to the Asian economic and financial crisis.

A further flood of oil on the market would hit prices even harder, traders said.

"It is enormous. The market expected not more than a 50 per cent rise to three billion dollars," said Medhi Varzi, an oil expert at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson.

"That figure seems excessive. Were it to be approved by the Security Council, it would be the worst thing you could think of for the oil market," said Leo Drollas, an expert at the Centre for Global Energy Studies think-tank.

Quite apart from investors' fears of a price plunge, experts believe Iraq would have trouble in the short-term of increasing its export capacity by such a margin. The infrastructure is already in poor condition and there is the possibility of new U.S. and British bombing.

LONDON (AFP) — Oil industry analysts here criticised on Monday a proposal by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to allow a big increase in Iraqi oil sales as damaging to oil prices and impractical.

Oil prices plunged Monday following Mr. Annan's recommendation that Iraq be allowed to increase exports in an oil-for-food programme to \$5.2 billion worth from \$2 billion for each six-month period.

The revenues are meant to allow Iraq to overcome crippling poverty caused by U.N. sanctions imposed in 1990 after Baghdad's invasion of neighbouring Kuwait.

In London, the benchmark Brent North Sea oil price traded at \$15.67 a barrel, down from \$15.96 late Friday on the International Petroleum Exchange.

Oil prices are already being kept down by the OPEC cartel's decision to boost production this year by 10 per cent to 27.5 million barrels a day, and a drop in demand due to the Asian economic and financial crisis.

A further flood of oil on the market would hit prices even harder, traders said.

"It is enormous. The market expected not more than a 50 per cent rise to three billion dollars," said Medhi Varzi, an oil expert at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson.

"That figure seems excessive. Were it to be approved by the Security Council, it would be the worst thing you could think of for the oil market," said Leo Drollas, an expert at the Centre for Global Energy Studies think-tank.

Quite apart from investors' fears of a price plunge, experts believe Iraq would have trouble in the short-term of increasing its export capacity by such a margin. The infrastructure is already in poor condition and there is the possibility of new U.S. and British bombing.

LONDON (AFP) — Oil industry analysts here criticised on Monday a proposal by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to allow a big increase in Iraqi oil sales as damaging to oil prices and impractical.

Oil prices plunged Monday following Mr. Annan's recommendation that Iraq be allowed to increase exports in an oil-for-food programme to \$5.2 billion worth from \$2 billion for each six-month period.

The revenues are meant to allow Iraq to overcome crippling poverty caused by U.N. sanctions imposed in 1990 after Baghdad's invasion of neighbouring Kuwait.

In London, the benchmark Brent North Sea oil price traded at \$15.67 a barrel, down from \$15.96 late Friday on the International Petroleum Exchange.

Oil prices are already being kept down by the OPEC cartel's decision to boost production this year by 10 per cent to 27.5 million barrels a day, and a drop in demand due to the Asian economic and financial crisis.

A further flood of oil on the market would hit prices even harder, traders said.

"It is enormous. The market expected not more than a 50 per cent rise to three billion dollars," said Medhi Varzi, an oil expert at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson.

"That figure seems excessive. Were it to be approved by the Security Council, it would be the worst thing you could think of for the oil market," said Leo Drollas, an expert at the Centre for Global Energy Studies think-tank.

Quite apart from investors' fears of a price plunge, experts believe Iraq would have trouble in the short-term of increasing its export capacity by such a margin. The infrastructure is already in poor condition and there is the possibility of new U.S. and British bombing.

LONDON (AFP) — Oil industry analysts here criticised on Monday a proposal by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to allow a big increase in Iraqi oil sales as damaging to oil prices and impractical.

Oil prices plunged Monday following Mr. Annan's recommendation that Iraq be allowed to increase exports in an oil-for-food programme to \$5.2 billion worth from \$2 billion for each six-month period.

The revenues are meant to allow Iraq to overcome crippling poverty caused by U.N. sanctions imposed in 1990 after Baghdad's invasion of neighbouring Kuwait.

In London, the benchmark Brent North Sea oil price traded at \$15.67 a barrel, down from \$15.96 late Friday on the International Petroleum Exchange.

Oil prices are already being kept down by the OPEC cartel's decision to boost production this year by 10 per cent to 27.5 million barrels a day, and a drop in demand due to the Asian economic and financial crisis.

A further flood of oil on the market would hit prices even harder, traders said.

"It is enormous. The market expected not more than a 50 per cent rise to three billion dollars," said Medhi Varzi, an oil expert at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson.

"That figure seems excessive. Were it to be approved by the Security Council, it would be the worst thing you could think of for the oil market," said Leo Drollas, an expert at the Centre for Global Energy Studies think-tank.

Quite apart from investors' fears of a price plunge, experts believe Iraq would have trouble in the short-term of increasing its export capacity by such a margin. The infrastructure is already in poor condition and there is the possibility of new U.S. and British bombing.

LONDON (AFP) — Oil industry analysts here criticised on Monday a proposal by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to allow a big increase in Iraqi oil sales as damaging to oil prices and impractical.

Oil prices plunged Monday following Mr. Annan's recommendation that Iraq be allowed to increase exports in an oil-for-food programme to \$5.2 billion worth from \$2 billion for each six-month period.

The revenues are meant to allow Iraq to overcome crippling poverty caused by U.N. sanctions imposed in 1990 after Baghdad's invasion of neighbouring Kuwait.

In London, the benchmark Brent North Sea oil price traded at \$15.67 a barrel, down from \$15.96 late Friday on the International Petroleum Exchange.

Oil prices are already being kept down by the OPEC cartel's decision to boost production this year by 10 per cent to 27.5 million barrels a day, and a drop in demand due to the Asian economic and financial crisis.

A further flood of oil on the market would hit prices even harder, traders said.

"It is enormous. The market expected not more than a 50 per cent rise to three billion dollars," said Medhi Varzi, an oil expert at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson.

"That figure seems excessive. Were it to be approved by the Security Council, it would be the worst thing you could think of for the oil market," said Leo Drollas, an expert at the Centre for Global Energy Studies think-tank.

Quite apart from investors' fears of a price plunge, experts believe Iraq would have trouble in the short-term of increasing its export capacity by such a margin. The infrastructure is already in poor condition and there is the possibility of new U.S. and British bombing.

LONDON (AFP) — Oil industry analysts here criticised on Monday a proposal by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to allow a big increase in Iraqi oil sales as damaging to oil prices and impractical.

Oil prices plunged Monday following Mr. Annan's recommendation that Iraq be allowed to increase exports in an oil-for-food programme to \$5.2 billion worth from \$2 billion for each six-month period.

The revenues are meant to allow Iraq to overcome crippling poverty caused by U.N. sanctions imposed in 1990 after Baghdad's invasion of neighbouring Kuwait.

In London, the benchmark Brent North Sea oil price traded at \$15.67 a barrel, down from \$15.96 late Friday on the International Petroleum Exchange.

Oil prices are already being kept down by the OPEC cartel's decision to boost production this year by 10 per cent to 27.5 million barrels a day, and a drop in demand due to the Asian economic and financial crisis.

A further flood of oil on the market would hit prices even harder, traders said.

"It is enormous. The market expected not more than a 50 per cent rise to three billion dollars," said Medhi Varzi, an oil expert at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson.

"That figure seems excessive. Were it to be approved by the Security Council, it would be the worst thing you could think of for the oil market," said Leo Drollas, an expert at the Centre for Global Energy Studies think-tank.

Quite apart from investors' fears of a price plunge, experts believe Iraq would have trouble in the short-term of increasing its export capacity by such a margin. The infrastructure is already in poor condition and there is the possibility of new U.S. and British bombing.

LONDON (AFP) — Oil industry analysts here criticised on Monday a proposal by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to allow a big increase in Iraqi oil sales as damaging to oil prices and impractical.

Oil prices plunged Monday following Mr. Annan's recommendation that Iraq be allowed to increase exports in an oil-for-food programme to \$5.2 billion worth from \$2 billion for each six-month period.

The revenues are meant to allow Iraq to overcome crippling poverty caused by U.N. sanctions imposed in 1990 after Baghdad's invasion of neighbouring Kuwait.

In London, the benchmark Brent North Sea oil price traded at \$15.67 a barrel, down from \$15.96 late Friday on the International Petroleum Exchange.

Oil prices are already being kept down by the OPEC cartel's decision to boost production this year by 10 per cent to 27.5 million barrels a day, and a drop in demand due to the Asian economic and financial crisis.

A further flood of oil on the market would hit prices even harder, traders said.

"It is enormous. The market expected not more than a 50 per cent rise to three billion dollars," said Medhi Varzi, an oil expert at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson.

"That figure seems excessive. Were it to be approved by the Security Council, it would be the worst thing you could think of for the oil market," said Leo Drollas, an expert at the Centre for Global Energy Studies think-tank.

Quite apart from investors' fears of a price plunge, experts believe Iraq would have trouble in the short-term of increasing its export capacity by such a margin. The infrastructure is already in poor condition and there is the possibility of new U.S. and British bombing.

LONDON (AFP) — Oil industry analysts here criticised on Monday a proposal by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to allow a big increase in Iraqi oil sales as damaging to oil prices and impractical.

Oil prices plunged Monday following Mr. Annan's recommendation that Iraq be allowed to increase exports in an oil-for-food programme to \$5.2 billion worth from \$2 billion for each six-month period.

The revenues are meant to allow Iraq to overcome crippling poverty caused by U.N. sanctions imposed in 1990 after Baghdad's invasion of neighbouring Kuwait.

In London, the benchmark Brent North Sea oil price traded at \$15.67 a barrel, down from \$15.96 late Friday on the International Petroleum Exchange.

Oil prices are already being kept down by the OPEC cartel's decision to boost production this year by 10 per cent to 27.5 million barrels a day, and a drop in demand due to the Asian economic and financial crisis.

A further flood of oil on the market would hit prices even harder, traders said.

"It is enormous. The market expected not more than a 50 per cent rise to three billion dollars," said Medhi Varzi, an oil expert at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson.

"That figure seems excessive. Were it to be approved by the Security Council, it would be the worst thing you could think of for the oil market," said Leo Drollas, an expert at the Centre for Global Energy Studies think-tank.

Quite apart from investors' fears of a price plunge, experts believe Iraq would have trouble in the short-term of increasing its export capacity by such a margin. The infrastructure is already in poor condition and there is the possibility of new U.S. and British bombing.

LONDON (AFP) — Oil industry analysts here criticised on Monday a proposal by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to allow a big increase in Iraqi oil sales as damaging to oil prices and impractical.

Oil prices plunged Monday following Mr. Annan's recommendation that Iraq be allowed to increase exports in an oil-for-food programme to \$5.2 billion worth from \$2 billion for each six-month period.

The revenues are meant to allow Iraq to overcome crippling poverty caused by U.N. sanctions imposed in 1990 after Baghdad's invasion of neighbouring Kuwait.

In London, the benchmark Brent North Sea oil price traded at \$15.67 a barrel, down from \$15.96 late Friday on the International Petroleum Exchange.

Oil prices are already being kept down by the OPEC cartel's decision to boost production this year by 10 per cent to 27.5 million barrels a day, and a drop in demand due to the Asian economic and financial crisis.

A further flood of oil on the market would hit prices even harder, traders said.

"It is enormous. The market expected not more than a 50 per cent rise to three billion dollars," said Medhi Varzi, an oil

Samaranch declares women's Olympic revolution

NAGANO (AFP) — A women's revolution in the Olympic movement was set in motion here on Monday by International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch.

In future any new sport seeking entry to the Olympics must include women's events, Samaranch declared at the opening ceremony of the 107th IOC session.

"The Olympic movement is determined to make its contribution so that the 21st century marks the beginning of a new era for women in world sport," said Samaranch.

And in a bid to strengthen the position of women, the IOC president insisted that their place in sport's administration be dramatically increased.

"We reiterate our call to the components of the Olympic family to make every effort to fill 10 per cent of the posts in their legislative and executive bodies with women by the year 2000, and 20 per cent by 2005," said Samaranch.

The first sign of shift has been the inclusion of women's modern pentathlon in the 2000 Sydney Games.

Previously there was only men's modern pentathlon, with 32 athletes allowed to compete. In Sydney the total number of competitors will remain at 32 but it will be made up of 16 men and 16 women.

But while the IOC battles for women's rights, Samaranch warned that the Olympics were under threat from the continued use of performance-enhancing drugs by athletes.

And he hit out at sports federations that refused to join the fight.

"It was the International Olympic Committee which first launched the fight against doping in 1968, during the Games in Mexico City when doping controls were not in

vogue," he said.

"It is thanks to our determination and force of conviction that certain International Olympic sport Federations, National Olympic Committees and even government agencies have joined us in this campaign."

"However there are many sports organisations which have taken no measures to combat this scourge," he added. Samaranch answered critics who accused the modern Olympic movement of selling out to commercialism and television.

Since the Spaniard took over the IOC in 1980 the Olympics have become a multi-billion dollar business. American network NBC have paid nearly \$5 billion for the U.S. rights to show Games up until 2008.

"It is thanks to the television rights and the partnerships with commercial firms that we are able to subsidize our own activities," he explained.

Despite the huge costs of staging a Games there is no shortage of cities willing to bid for the right to hold them - a point Samaranch stressed.

"Cities are preparing or considering submitting a bid for the Olympic Games in the years 2006, 2008, 2010 and even 2012. What better image could illustrate the universality of their Olympic Games and their importance in our society," he said.

So far six bids, all European, have been made for the 2006 Winter Games, St. Moritz, Switzerland; Opatowitz, Slovakia; Zakopane, Poland; the Turin region of Italy, and joint bids by Helsinki and Lillehammer and another by Klagenfurt, Austria, in a three-country bid with Slovenia and Italy.

The IOC will decide who gets 2006 in September 1999.

Winter Olympic info system suffers 1st blip

NAGANO (AFP) — The first foul-up of the high-tech Olympic results and information system at the Nagano Winter Games cropped up Monday with the South Korean national anthem falsely identified. "We are in the process of changing it," said Ko Yamaguchi, the media chief of the Nagano Organising Committee (NAOC).

The mistake has flawed the NAOC's multi-million dollar effort to prevent a recurrence of the numerous glitches that plagued a similar computer network at the Atlanta Summer Games in 1996.

The NAOC has spent 19.1 billion yen (\$147 million), 15 per cent more than originally planned, on information and telecommunications, totally revising the "Info 96" system developed by IBM.

Nagano Olympic transport chief begs for help

NAGANO (AFP) — It will take a lot of begging to solve the traffic congestion which threatens to disrupt the Nagano Winter Olympics starting this weekend, organisers said Monday.

The Nagano organising committee (NAOC) and local police have been calling on drivers to help cut traffic by 30 per cent during the 16-day Games, said NAOC transport centre manager Takashi Yamada.

But the request was mostly unheeded. On a day reserved for testing the voluntary curb last week, traffic in the centre of the city dropped by only 10 per cent. "We stopped short of the goal but awareness has been on the rise," Yamada said.

Asked if there was a contingency plan to counter traffic turmoil, he said there was none.

"With that in mind, we have been appealing for various kinds of help through newspapers and radio and television," he added.

Traffic jams have haunted International Olympic Committee (IOC) leaders gathered here for meetings ahead of the Games.

They are still smarting from the memories of broken schedules and stray buses at the Atlanta Summer Games in 1996.

IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch wondered why it took 20 minutes to move a few kilometres from the Olympic main press centre to the City Hall.

Marc Hodler, head of the International

Ski Federation, said that transport would be a "crucial issue" here. He said traffic did not seem to "circulate" in the centre of Nagano City, the seat of a 1,400-year-old Buddhist temple which draws seven million visitors every year.

About 900 buses, 300 of them from neighbouring provinces, are mobilised to ferry some 60,000 people — competitors, officials, journalists and people otherwise assigned to the Olympics. About 1.2 million spectators are expected.

Thoroughfares in the city have been widened and many paths to Olympic venues will be made off limits to general traffic during the Games.

But Hakuba, the venue for Alpine skiing speed events, ski-jumping and cross-country races, is linked with Nagano only by a winding two-lane road.

The NAOC traffic chief said he had studied transport problems in past Olympics.

"I hear that any transport system in the history of the Olympics has been rated perfect and sufficient in its functions," he mused.

"It has been always very difficult and complicated."

Injury worries as top European clubs pocket the points

PARIS (AFP) — The teams who have been setting the pace at the top of the major European leagues could be satisfied with their work this weekend — although some top players were left nursing serious injuries which could endanger their participation in the World Cup finals in France this summer.

In Spain Barcelona leapfrogged rivals Real Madrid to go top but their unconvincing 2-1 victory over bottom club Sporting Gijon at the Nou Camp Stadium did little to please their fans. And although they now have a one-point advantage their lead may be short-lived since Real will be playing Valencia on Monday.

But while Barcelona were stealing maximum points, fifth-placed Atletico Madrid were being held to a 1-1 draw at Celta Vigo, who finished with nine players. And to make matters worse, Atletico's Brazilian playmaker Juninho was stretched off in the second-half after scoring his side's goal from the penalty spot with a nasty-looking leg injury.

Later reports from hospital suggested that the South American may have broken his leg and damaged ligaments, and if that is confirmed

the former Middlesbrough forward may well miss the World Cup finals.

In Italy there was no change at the top — Juventus scoring a 2-0 away victory over Lecce and Inter Milan coming away 1-0 winners from Brescia — Ronaldo ending his goal drought by scoring the winner in the 74th minute.

Bayern Munich reduced the gap to two points between themselves and German first division leaders Kaiserslautern by beating Hamburg 3-0. Kaiserslautern, the first newly-promoted side to head the mid-winter break standings, were held 1-1 away at UEFA Cup holders Schalke 04.

In France, the part-timers of third division Poitiers and second division Sochaux destroyed first division opponents to reach the French League Cup quarter-finals at the weekend.

Poitiers shocked visiting Le Havre by sealing a 2-1 home win thanks to two goals in the first quarter-of-an-hour from Jerome Billac. And Sochaux made sure Cannes' nightmare season continued by defeating the struggling Riviera club 1-0 thanks to a 65th minute goal by Michael Isabey.

The other clubs to reach the last eight were all first division

outfits — Paris St Germain, Marseille, Lens, Metz, Auxerre and Bordeaux.

In Italy, Ronaldo's goal was not the only bad news for Juventus. Their defensive lynchpin Ciro Ferrara broke his leg in a 21st minute tackle at Lecce and will be out of action for the rest of the season.

Ferrara, whose injury will almost certainly cost him a trip to the World Cup finals in France, just as another injury made him miss Euro 96, was left crying with pain after a tackle by Alessandro Conticchio.

The man who replaced him, Mark Iuliano, gave Juventus the lead in first-half injury-time, and Alessandro Del Piero's shot put the result beyond doubt in the dying minutes.

But despite keeping his side one point ahead of Inter, Juventus coach Marcello Lippi had little to celebrate on Sunday evening.

"You've no heart for talking about points won, goals scored or places in the table on a day like this, when you lose a player as important as Ciro for such a long time," he said. "I feel very, very sorry about it all."

There was relief, meanwhile, for Inter coach Gigi Simoni, who saw his men earn three points.

Ronaldo, who had two efforts cleared off the line, made no mistake in the 74th minute with a rare headed goal, nodding into an empty net after Uruguayan Alvaro Recoba chipped the ball over the goalkeeper.

Ronaldo had not scored in the league since December 6, but his teammates had to hang on with 10 men at the end, with winger Francesco Moriero picking up his second bookable offence in the 81st minute.

"It's been a good day," said Simoni. "I was glad about Ronaldo's goal, because at least now there will be a bit of silence around him."

Third-placed Udinese's 10-match unbeaten run finally came to an end in Florence, where they went down 1-0 to Fiorentina.

Brazilian-born-Belgian Luis Oliveira scored Fiorentina winner from two yards, while Dino Baggio did the same for Parma from eight yards to earn them a precious 1-0 victory over Bari.

Lazio had to settle for a meagre point at bottom club Napoli in the night match. The 0-0 draw earned Napoli only

their seventh point of the season, after Lazio's Pierluigi Casiraghi twice beat the goalkeeper but both times saw his shot hit the post and bounce out.

Argentine Abel Balbo, who hadn't scored in five matches, bagged a hat-trick at the Olympic stadium in AS Roma's thrilling 4-3 win over Empoli — which saw three goals in the last five minutes.

Roma coach Zdenek Zeman was delighted with his men, saying: "We had a good game, but then we've been playing well recently."

AC Milan substitute Filippo Maniero celebrated his debut by scoring a 90th minute winner as they beat Piacenza 1-0 at San Siro and Sampdoria drew 1-1 at Italian Cup holders Vicenza.

Barcelona's performance caused the club's vice-president Joan Gaspart to say: "When you're playing the bottom club, who haven't won a single match, you have to win by a big margin."

Two goals from Brazilian Rivaldo spared the blushes of Louis van Gaal's men and brought an end to their run of four games without a win — but it did not end the loud criticism of the fans. The team were jeered off the pitch and many of the Barcelona supporters chanted slogans demanding that the Dutch coach to resign.

Barcelona's problems are nothing compared to those of Sporting, however. The bottom club have lost 20 of their 23 games this season and are still looking for their first win.

Elsewhere on Sunday Real Sociedad moved into third place, two points behind Barcelona, with a thumping 4-0 win at Real Valladolid. Goals by Aitor Lopez Rekarte, Darko Kovacevic and Oscar de Paula (twice) did the damage for one of this season's surprise packages. Fifth-placed Atletico Madrid drew 1-1 at Celta Vigo but will see it as two points dropped after Celta finished the match with only nine men.

In France, Poitiers, who put out second division Nimes in the previous round, shocked visiting Le Havre by taking a two goal lead in the first quarter-of-an-hour. Both of their goals came from Jerome Billac who ripped apart the composure of the Le Havre defence.

Le Havre, who had beaten Paris St Germain away in a first division league match earlier in the week, pulled one back through Novak midway through the first-half — but



Inter Milan's Brazilian striker Ronaldo (R) takes the ball past Brescia's Atino Diana during their Serie A match Brescia. Inter Milan won the match 1-0 with a goal from Ronaldo (Reuters photo)

they were never able to climb back in to the match.

Sochaux made sure Cannes' nightmare season continued by defeating the struggling Riviera side 1-0 thanks to a 65th minute goal by Michael Isabey.

The defeat ended Cannes' hopes that a good cup run might compensate for their poor league form (they are currently rooted at the bottom of the first division). Paris St Germain reassured their fans with a 2-0 victory over visiting Montpellier. James Debba ran onto a superb through ball from Rai to slot home in the 20th minute and Florian Maurice then scored a second goal six minutes into the second-half.

Marseille made it an unhappy return to his former hunting ground for former Irish star Tony Cascarino. Cascarino's new club Nancy crashed 3-0.

After failing to impress in a dour first half which brought only a 40th minute penalty from experienced Laurent Blanc, Marseille looked more like their normal selves after the interval.

Brando, a former French Under-21 international, fired past Frederic Roux following a superb overhead pass by Italian international Fabrizio Ravanelli sixty seconds into the second-half, and the 24-year-old striker then sealed the home win six minutes from time after being sent through by former AC Milan and Barcelona striker Christophe Dugary.

Cascarino, who was Marseille's leading scorer in two successive seasons, missed several chances for the visitors but it was his strike partner Youssef Moustaid who had the best chance — his powerful shot being turned away for a corner in the 42nd minute.

First division pacesetters Metz cruised home against Marignies — talented French international Robert Pires, a target of English Premiership side Newcastle, scoring in the 17th minute and Yugoslavian international Vladan Lukic then making it 2-0 eight minutes into the second-half.

Lens, fifth in the first division title race, eventually overcame tough resistance by Niort, who had put Monaco out in the previous round. Yugoslavian international Anton Drobnjak finally ended the deadlock by heading home from a Stephan Ziani corner in the last minute of extra-time.

Auxerre also needed extra time — and a hat-trick from Stephane Guivarch — to put out visiting Toulouse 3-1. Guivarch put the home side clear with a 61st minute penalty but Dominique Arribage equalised with just five minutes left. Two more sweetly-struck goals from Guivarch in extra-time, both from direct free kicks, finally put Auxerre through.

Bordeaux had already reached the quarter-finals Friday when they hammered Le Mans 5-1.

SCOREBOARD

NBA

New York	89	Miami	83
LA Lakers	112	Chicago	87
Milwaukee	118	Minnesota	110
Boston	107	Houston	96
Utah	115	Golden State	88
San Antonio	103	Sacramento	97
Portland	97	Toronto	90
Indiana	99	LA Clippers	92
Seattle	97	New Jersey	87

NHL

Detroit	4	Washington	2
NY Islanders	2	Boston	2 (OF)
Buffalo	5	Florida	2
Montreal	6	Carolina	3
Anaheim	4	Chicago	3 (OT)

Spanish Championship

Barcelona	2	Spoting Gijon	1
Real Valladolid	0	Real Sociedad	4
Merida	1	Espanyol	1
Compostela	2	Real Zaragoza	0
R. Santander	0	D. La Coruna	1
Celta Vigo	1	Atletico Madrid	1

Turkish League

Vanspor	0	Altay	0
Genclerbirligi	3	Sekerspor	0
Kayserispor	2	Bursaspor	1
Karabukspor	0	C. Dardanel	0
Trabzonspor	0	Fenerbahce	0
Galatasaray	2	Kocaelispor	0

Portuguese League

Varzim	2	Amadora	2
Guimaraes	0	Rio Ave	0
Maritimo	2	Lava	0
Benfica	2	Vitoria Setubal	0

English Premiership

Aston Villa	0	Newcastle	1
-------------	---	-----------	---

Greek Championship

Panathinaikos	6	Panahiki	1
Xanthi	2	PAOK	2
Heraklis	3	Ethnikos	2
Ionikos	1	Veria	1
OFI	3	Proodeftiki	0
Pyrgos	3	Apollon	0
Panionios	1	Kalamata	2
Athinaikos	0	Kavala	0

Dutch League

FC Brugge	2	Harelbeke	1
Aalst	0	RWD Molenbeek	2
Ekeren	4	Genk	3

Italian Serie A

Bologna	0	Atalanta	0
Brescia	0	Inter Milan	1
Fiorentina	1	Udinese	0
Lecce	0	Juventus	2
AC Milan	1	Piacenza	0
Parma	1	Bari	0
AS Roma	4	Empoli	3
Vicenza	1	Sampdoria	1

French League Cup

Poitiers	2	Le Havre	1
----------	---	----------	---



Barcelona's Brazilian midfielder Rivaldo (L) takes the ball past Sporting de Gijon's Brazilian midfielder Rodriguez (C) and Jesus Enrique Velasco before scoring his second goal during the Spanish first division. FC Barcelona won 2-1 (Reuters photo)

DAY AT	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 6499238	CINEMA TEL: 6677420	CINEMA TEL: 079 33430	CINEMA TEL: 079 33430	Bisham Yance Theatre TEL: 625155 NOW ON DAILY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE
	PHILADELPHIA "1"	PHILADELPHIA "2"	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 2	GALLERIA 1	
	Pierce Brosnan as James Bond 007...TOMORROW	PINOCCHIO Shows: 12:30, 3:30	SPEED 2 Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 GEORGE OF THE	CONCORD "1" Adel Imam & Yusra ... in RISALA ILA AL WALI (ARABIC) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	ABDOUN Adel Imam & Yusra ... in RISALA ILA AL WALI (ARABIC) Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	ABDOUN HOME ALONE 3 Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30	

insport
elp

aid that transport was
here. He said traffic
ulate in the center
seat of a 1,400-year-old
which draws seven mil-

ses, 300 of them be-
vices, are mobilized
0 people — competi-
ists and people other-
ympics. About 12 mil-
ected.
in the city have been
any paths to Olympic
ade off limits to gen-
Games.

venue for Alpine ski-
jumping and cross-
d with Nagano only by
road.

he chief said he had
lem in past Olympic
transport system in the
ics has been rated pos-
its functions," he said.
very difficult and ex-

BOARD

ago	83
esota	87
on	110
on	96
en State	88
mento	97
to	90
ippers	92
Jersey	87

ington	2
on	2 (OT)
la	3
ina	3
ago	3 (OT)

ng Gijon	1
siedad	4
ol	1
aragosa	0
Cortina	0
to Madrid	1

spor	0
spor	1
daniel	0
rafice	0
lipor	0

ora	2
ie	0
Seutbal	0

isde	1
------	---

iki	1
as	2
stiki	0
atd	2

eke	1
Molenbeek	2

ta	0
ilan	1
e	2
as	0
za	0
oria	1

re	1
----	---

am Yarns Theatre	TEL: 625155
NEW ON DAILY	
GOVERNMENT	
THE SERVICE	
OF PEOPLE	
ring Hisham Yarns	
ad Amal Dabbas	

Lakers upset Bulls 112-87

INGLEWOOD, California (AP) — The Los Angeles Lakers gave back exactly what they received from the Chicago Bulls six weeks earlier, turning Sunday's East-West showdown into a marquee mismatch.

The Lakers, blown out at Chicago in mid-December, broke the game open early in the third quarter and toyed with the defending champions the rest of the way as they defeated the Bulls 112-87.

Rick Fox played his second straight outstanding game and led Los Angeles with 25 points. Shaquille O'Neal added 24 and Eddie Jones 20.

Kobe Bryant, at 19 the youngest all-star in National Basketball Association history, didn't get the better of his much-hyped matchup with Michael Jordan but still finished with 20 points. Jordan led all scorers with 31 points.

New York Knicks 89, Miami Heat 83: In New York, Larry Johnson scored a season-high 35 points and the New York won the latest instalment of this intense rivalry.

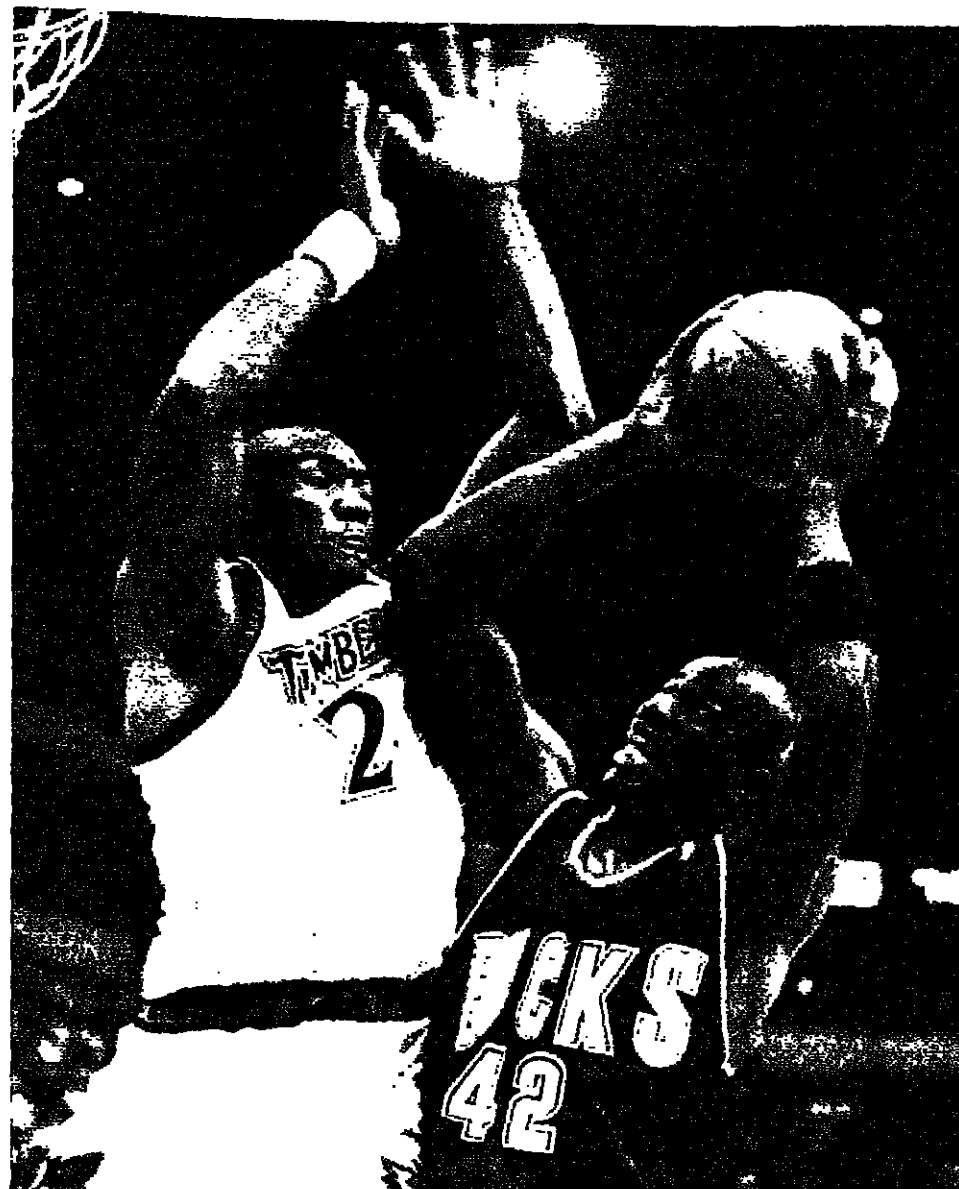
Johnson, ejected from New York's previous game, scored nine straight points early in the fourth quarter as the Knicks stopped a three-game losing streak. Allan Houston added 20 points for New York, which made 23 of 26 free throws, including 10 in a row during the closing minutes.

Alonzo Mourning and Jamal Mashburn had 22 points apiece to lead the Heat. Tim Hardaway added 17 points on 4-for-14 shooting before fouling out in the final minute.

Temper flared in the second quarter when Mourning hit Johnson on a drive to the basket. Johnson responded with a two-hand shove to Mourning's chest as players from both teams grabbed Jerseys and trash-talked in front of New York's bench.

Milwaukee Bucks 118, Minnesota Timberwolves 110: In Minneapolis, Glenn Robinson scored 29 points and Terrell Brandon had 22 points and 12 assists as Milwaukee erased a 17-point deficit.

Ray Allen added 17 points for the Bucks, who extended their winning streak to five games, their longest since they won eight



Milwaukee Bucks' forward Tyrone Hill (42) tries to shoot around the defence of Minnesota Timberwolves forward Tom Hammonds in the first half (Reuters photo)

straight in 1990-91.

The Bucks shot 26-for-37 (70.2) from the field in the second half, in which they outscored Minnesota 71-50.

Kevin Garnett had 26 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists for the Wolves, who played without starters Tom Gugliotta and Chris Carr.

Seattle SuperSonics 97, New Jersey Nets 87: At Seattle, Vin Baker scored 24 points and Detlef Schrempf had 20 points and 13 rebounds as Seattle improved its NBA-best record to 36-10. Gary Payton had 14 points and 14 assists as the Sonics won for the 19th time in 21 games at home.

Seattle outscored the nets 17-9 in the final 4:41 after New Jersey cut the Sonics' lead to two points twice in the fourth quarter.

Indiana Pacers 99, Los Angeles Clippers 92: At Los Angeles, Rik Smits scored 23 points and Reggie Miller hit a clutch 3-pointer as Indiana held off the Los Angeles Clippers for their seventh consecutive victory.

Miller's shot with 13.5 seconds left helped send the Clippers to their eighth straight loss and 10th in a row against Indiana. The Pacers have won 11 of 12.

Rodney Rogers scored 17 points and Lorenzen Wright

grabbed 17 rebounds for the Clippers, who have lost all seven home games this season against Eastern Conference opponents. They haven't beaten the Pacers since Dec. 13, 1992, at the Sports Arena.

Portland Trail Blazers 97, Toronto Raptors 90: At Portland, Oregon, Isaiah Rider scored a season-high 38 points as Portland broke out of its homecourt doldrums by beating Toronto.

Rider, who has scored 30 points or more five times this season, has totalled 67 points in his last two games. Gary Trent added 17 points and eight rebounds for Portland.

San Antonio Spurs 103, Sacramento Kings 97: At Sacramento, California, David Robinson led San Antonio's big front line and the Spurs used a late 9-0 run to down Sacramento.

The Victory was the fourth straight for San Antonio, which had double-doubles from its entire front line. Robinson had 33 points and 18 rebounds, rookie Tim Duncan had 14 points and 12 rebounds, and Will Perdue had 10 points and 14 boards.

Sacramento, which had its eight-game homecourt winning streak snapped, pulled into a 90-90 tie on Mitch Richmond's 3-point goal with 2:53 remaining. The spurs scored the next nine points.

Richmond scored 27 of his 31 points in the second half, including 10 in a row in one fourth-quarter stretch

Sprint king Greene matches 60 metres record

STUTTGART (AFP) — American Maurice Greene matched the 60 metres world record at the indoor athletics meeting here on Sunday.

The world 100m champion equalled the best ever time of 6.41 seconds set by his fellow American Andre Cason in Madrid six years ago.

He showed he was in perfect shape by winning his heat in 6.43 — the second fastest time ever.

In the final, Greene again made a flying start but had to produce an extra burst of speed at the finish to edge ahead of compatriot Jon Drummond and much Cason's record.

Greene is looking to go even faster when he moves on to race in Madrid and New York and said: "I think I can run 6.37 — certainly that would be my aim."

"I came here because my coach (John Smith) said I could break the world record."

Greene also claimed 9.76secs for 100 metres outdoors is within his capabilities.

"John Smith says 9.79 is more realistic. But I want to accomplish something everyone will say is unbelievable."

There were near-misses at the 1,500m and 3,000m world records. In the shorter event, Haile Gebrselassie ran 3mins 31.76secs — just over half a second outside the 3:31.18 Hicham El Guerrouj ran on the same track 12 months ago.

The Ethiopian weakened in the final 300 metres having been ahead of schedule. In the 3,000 metres, Daniel Komen was chasing the daunting world record of 7:26.14 set by Gebrselassie last weekend in Karlsruhe.

The Kenyan gave it his best shot and, despite being on his own for the final 1,000m, ran 7:27.93 — the second fastest of all time.

Mozambique's Maria Mutola produced the best women's performance of the day with the fastest time in the world this year over 800m — 1:58.83.

Gail Devers of the United States took the women's 60m honours in 7.09secs, finishing 4/100ths ahead of Nigerian Chioma Ajunwa.

Located in Khilda, near the Modern English School.
Consists of 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, salon and dining, veranda, separate entrance, separate central heating, telephone and luxurious furniture.
Please call Tel.: 5532306

Street's Olympic hopes intact after big crash

NAGANO (AFP) — Picabo Street's coach is convinced her horrific crash in a World Cup downhill last Saturday will in no way derail her bid to win gold at the Winter Olympics.

The 26-year-old suffered mild concussion and minor injuries when her binding released at 60 mph in the final pre-Olympic downhill at Are in Sweden.

"The good thing to come out of this, and it is very important, is that after the crash she had two years ago resulting in a major injury she came out of this one without any serious injury," said coach Herwig Demtschar.

Street was sidelined for almost a year with a knee injury sustained in the 1996 crash but has battled back to approach the form that made her one of the world's top women downhillers.

The daughter of New Age parents who saddled their offspring with an American Indian name meaning "Shining Water" made her first World Cup start on skis only last December at Val d'Isere following the accident.

The American claimed a spot inside the Top Ten, which left her satisfied with her comeback progress.

"There is no problem with the knee. But sometimes when it is cold I feel it a bit. It just needs to be warmed up and the muscle kept warm so it doesn't tighten up," she said at the time.

Before the injury, Street proved her credentials with nine World Cup downhill wins

— including repeats in 1995 and 1996 at Lake Louise, Canada, and Cortina di Ampezzo, Italy. That sort of success led to a pair of World Cup downhill season titles.

But if that comeback fight has been won, the American, the only World Cup women's skier with a Nike contract, a signature tennis shoe, and a line of her own clothing, faces perhaps an even more daunting battle here.

Somewhat she has to match the hype that has followed her over the past four years since winning a silver medal behind Katja Seizinger at Lillehammer, 1994, and following up with gold at the World Championships two years later in Spain.

Street's Lillehammer medal earned her the highest profile of any American women ski racer in several decades.

She can be seen in magazines advertising, among other things, watches and sunglasses. Her winnings have allowed her to buy a beach hideaway in Hawaii and she is hardly ever seen at home without the company of Duggan, an Australian cattle dog.

However Street ignores the hype.

Now that she is no longer an Olympic favourite, she appears to be happy to play the follower as her Nagano deadline approaches.

"Let someone else lead for a while," she says.

"They can worry about where I am. But I certainly have plans at being back out in front."



Volunteers fix the Olympic rings to the finish area at the ski jumping competition venue during final preparations for the XVIII Olympic Winter Games in this central Japanese alpine village February 2. The games open on February 7 with the first ski jumping event to take place (Reuters photo)

Invitation for Pre-Qualification of Contractors For the Construction of Integrated Development Project for the Southern Ghors

The Government of Jordan had the final design and tender documents prepared for the works listed below. It has secured funds from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development towards the finance of construction and supervision of these works. The three dams listed are to be constructed of Roller Compacted Concrete (RCC) with the properties as described:-

- Wala Dam, 49m high, 300m long, 9.3MCM storage capacity, and estimated roller compacted concrete volume 185,000m³.
- Mujib Dam, 62m high, 660m long, 35MCM storage capacity, and estimated roller compacted concrete volume 750,000m³.
- Tannur Dam, 69m high, 240m long, 16.8MCM storage capacity, and estimated roller compacted concrete volume 260,000m³.
- Diversion weir at Mujib, with a 1.3 kms long tunnel, the southern conveyor 73.5 km long, northern conveyor 28 km long, and irrigation infrastructure for 11,862 dunums.

It is anticipated that the construction of the project will be divided into five separate contracts;

1. Construction of Wala Dam.
2. Construction of Tannur Dam.
3. Construction of Mujib Dam.
4. Construction of Mujib Weir and Conveyors.
5. Construction of Irrigation Infrastructure.

The Contract Documents and all correspondence related to the contract will be in the English language. Applications for pre-qualification are invited from International Contractors in association with Jordanian Contractors classified by the Government Tenders Directorate (G.T.D.) as First and Second Grade in the field of:

- a) Water and Sewerage or Roads or Concrete/Bridges & Culverts for Contracts 1,2,3 and 4.
- b) Water and Sewerage for Contract No. 5.

The International Contractor does not have to include the name of his local associate at the time of pre-qualification, however, the pre-qualification document should include a statement by the international contractor to confirm his commitment to enter into an association at the tender stage with a local contractor, having the same classification stated above, and to submit the association agreement.

International Contractors willing to participate in pre-qualification for the above project are invited to collect the pre-qualification documents in accordance with the following terms:

1. The share of local contractors shall be at least 25% of the total contract value.
2. All given information must be correct and accurate.
3. The International Contractors shall comply with the law of the Jordanian Engineering Association and Jordanian Contractors Association regarding registration.
4. The documents can be purchased for the following non-refundable fee:
 - a) JD150 for the pre-qualification document of "Wala and Tannur Dams" (one combined document).
 - b) JD150 for the pre-qualification document of "Mujib Dam."
 - c) JD150 for pre-qualification document of "Mujib Weir, Tunnel, Conveyors, and Irrigation Infrastructure."
5. The deadline set for the purchase of pre-qualification document shall be on February 10th, 1998.
6. The pre-qualification proposals shall be submitted to the Jordan Valley Authority (address below) not later than 13:00 hours (local time) on March 15th, 1998.

Address
Special Committee for the Mujib and Southern Ghors Project Address: P.O. Box 2769, Amman - Jordan
Fax: 962-6-5689916
Tel.: 962-6-5689-400
Tel.: 962-6-5689-464

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNIAH HIRSH

USE THOSE ENTRIES WISELY

Neither vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH		EAST	
♠ J 9 7	♠ 6 5	♠ 8 6 5	♠ K J 9 2
♥ 10 2	♥ A Q 10 3	♥ K J 9 2	♥ K A 3 2
♦ A Q 10 3	♦ 10 9 7 5	♦ 10 9 7 5	♦ 10 9 7 5
WEST		EAST	
♠ 4 3 2	♠ 7 9 7 3	♠ 7 9 7 3	♠ 7 9 7 3
♥ 7 9 7 3	♥ 7 9 7 3	♥ 7 9 7 3	♥ 7 9 7 3
♦ 7 6 4	♦ 7 6 4	♦ 7 6 4	♦ 7 6 4
♣ A Q J 6 6	♣ A Q J 6 6	♣ A Q J 6 6	♣ A Q J 6 6
SOUTH		EAST	
♠ A K Q 10 8	♠ A K Q 10 8	♠ A K Q 10 8	♠ A K Q 10 8
♥ A K Q J 4	♥ A K Q J 4	♥ A K Q J 4	♥ A K Q J 4
♦ 8 5	♦ 8 5	♦ 8 5	♦ 8 5
♣ A	♣ A	♣ A	♣ A

The bidding: SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♠ Pass 2♣ Pass 3♠ Pass 4♠ Pass 5♠ Pass 6♠ Pass 7♠ Pass 8♠ Pass 9♠ Pass 10♠ Pass 11♠ Pass 12♠ Pass 13♠ Pass 14♠ Pass 15♠ Pass 16♠ Pass 17♠ Pass 18♠ Pass 19♠ Pass 20♠ Pass 21♠ Pass 22♠ Pass 23♠ Pass 24♠ Pass 25♠ Pass 26♠ Pass 27♠ Pass 28♠ Pass 29♠ Pass 30♠ Pass 31♠ Pass 32♠ Pass 33♠ Pass 34♠ Pass 35♠ Pass 36♠ Pass 37♠ Pass 38♠ Pass 39♠ Pass 40♠ Pass 41♠ Pass 42♠ Pass 43♠ Pass 44♠ Pass 45♠ Pass 46♠ Pass 47♠ Pass 48♠ Pass 49♠ Pass 50♠ Pass 51♠ Pass 52♠ Pass 53♠ Pass 54♠ Pass 55♠ Pass 56♠ Pass 57♠ Pass 58♠ Pass 59♠ Pass 60♠ Pass 61♠ Pass 62♠ Pass 63♠ Pass 64♠ Pass 65♠ Pass 66♠ Pass 67♠ Pass 68♠ Pass 69♠ Pass 70♠ Pass 71♠ Pass 72♠ Pass 73♠ Pass 74♠ Pass 75♠ Pass 76♠ Pass 77♠ Pass 78♠ Pass 79♠ Pass 80♠ Pass 81♠ Pass 82♠ Pass 83♠ Pass 84♠ Pass 85♠ Pass 86♠ Pass 87♠ Pass 88♠ Pass 89♠ Pass 90♠ Pass 91♠ Pass 92♠ Pass 93♠ Pass 94♠ Pass 95♠ Pass 96♠ Pass 97♠ Pass 98♠ Pass 99♠ Pass 100♠ Pass 101♠ Pass 102♠ Pass 103♠ Pass 104♠ Pass 105♠ Pass 106♠ Pass 107♠ Pass 108♠ Pass 109♠ Pass 110♠ Pass 111♠ Pass 112♠ Pass 113♠ Pass 114♠ Pass 115♠ Pass 116♠ Pass 117♠ Pass 118♠ Pass 119♠ Pass 120♠ Pass 121♠ Pass 122♠ Pass 123♠ Pass 124♠ Pass 125♠ Pass 126♠ Pass 127♠ Pass 128♠ Pass 129♠ Pass 130♠ Pass 131♠ Pass 132♠ Pass 133♠ Pass 134♠ Pass 135♠ Pass 136♠ Pass 137♠ Pass 138♠ Pass 139♠ Pass 140♠ Pass 141♠ Pass 142♠ Pass 143♠ Pass 144♠ Pass 145♠ Pass 146♠ Pass 147♠ Pass 148♠ Pass 149♠ Pass 150♠ Pass 151♠ Pass 152♠ Pass 153♠ Pass 154♠ Pass 155♠ Pass 156♠ Pass 157♠ Pass 158♠ Pass 159♠ Pass 160♠ Pass 161♠ Pass 162♠ Pass 163♠ Pass 164♠ Pass 165♠ Pass 166♠ Pass 167♠ Pass 168♠ Pass 169♠ Pass 170♠ Pass 171♠ Pass 172♠ Pass 173♠ Pass 174♠ Pass 175♠ Pass 176♠ Pass 177♠ Pass 178♠ Pass 179♠ Pass 180♠ Pass 181♠ Pass 182♠ Pass 183♠ Pass 184♠ Pass 185♠ Pass 186♠ Pass 187♠ Pass 188♠ Pass 189♠ Pass 190♠ Pass 191♠ Pass 192♠ Pass 193♠ Pass 194♠ Pass 195♠ Pass 196♠ Pass 197♠ Pass 198♠ Pass 199♠ Pass 200♠ Pass 201♠ Pass 202♠ Pass 203♠ Pass 204♠ Pass 205♠ Pass 206♠ Pass 207♠ Pass 208♠ Pass 209♠ Pass 210♠ Pass 211♠ Pass 212♠ Pass 213♠ Pass 214♠ Pass 215♠ Pass 216♠ Pass 217♠ Pass 218♠ Pass 219♠ Pass 220♠ Pass 221♠ Pass 222♠ Pass 223♠ Pass 224♠ Pass 225♠ Pass 226♠ Pass 227♠ Pass 228♠ Pass 229♠ Pass 230♠ Pass 231♠ Pass 232♠ Pass 233♠ Pass 234♠ Pass 235♠ Pass 236♠ Pass 237♠ Pass 238♠ Pass 239♠ Pass 240♠ Pass 241♠ Pass 242♠ Pass 243♠ Pass 244♠ Pass 245♠ Pass 246♠ Pass 247♠ Pass 248♠ Pass 249♠ Pass 250♠ Pass 251♠ Pass 252♠ Pass 253♠ Pass 254♠ Pass 255♠ Pass 256♠ Pass 257♠ Pass 258♠ Pass 259♠ Pass 260♠ Pass 261♠ Pass 262♠ Pass 263♠ Pass 264♠ Pass 265♠ Pass 266♠ Pass 267♠ Pass 268♠ Pass 269♠ Pass 270♠ Pass 271♠ Pass 272♠ Pass 273♠ Pass 274♠ Pass 275♠ Pass 276♠ Pass 277♠ Pass 278♠ Pass 279♠ Pass 280♠ Pass 281♠ Pass 282♠ Pass 283♠ Pass 284♠ Pass 285♠ Pass 286♠ Pass 287♠ Pass 288♠ Pass 289♠ Pass 290♠ Pass 291♠ Pass 292♠ Pass 293♠ Pass 294♠ Pass 295♠ Pass 296♠ Pass 297♠ Pass 298♠ Pass 299♠ Pass 300♠ Pass 301♠ Pass 302♠ Pass 303♠ Pass 304♠ Pass 305♠ Pass 306♠ Pass 307♠ Pass 308♠ Pass 309♠ Pass 310♠ Pass 311♠ Pass 312♠ Pass 313♠ Pass 314♠ Pass 315♠ Pass 316♠ Pass 317♠ Pass 318♠ Pass 319♠ Pass 320♠ Pass 321♠ Pass 322♠ Pass 323♠ Pass 324♠ Pass 325♠ Pass 326♠ Pass 327♠ Pass 328♠ Pass 329♠ Pass 330♠ Pass 331♠ Pass 332♠ Pass 333♠ Pass 334♠ Pass 335♠ Pass 336♠ Pass 337♠ Pass 338♠ Pass 339♠ Pass 340♠ Pass 341♠ Pass 342♠ Pass 343♠ Pass 344♠ Pass 345♠ Pass 346♠ Pass 347♠ Pass 348♠ Pass 349♠ Pass 350♠ Pass 351♠ Pass 352♠ Pass 353♠ Pass 354♠ Pass 355♠ Pass 356♠ Pass 357♠ Pass 358♠ Pass 359♠ Pass 360♠ Pass 361♠ Pass 362♠ Pass 363♠ Pass 364♠ Pass 365♠ Pass 366♠ Pass 367♠ Pass 368♠ Pass 369♠ Pass 370♠ Pass 371♠ Pass 372♠ Pass 373♠ Pass 374♠ Pass 375♠ Pass 376♠ Pass 377♠ Pass 378♠ Pass 379♠ Pass 380♠ Pass 381♠ Pass 382♠ Pass 383♠ Pass 384♠ Pass 385♠ Pass 386♠ Pass 387♠ Pass 388♠ Pass 389♠ Pass 390♠ Pass 391♠ Pass 392♠ Pass 393♠ Pass 394♠ Pass 395♠ Pass 396♠ Pass 397♠ Pass 398♠ Pass 399♠ Pass 400♠ Pass 401♠ Pass 402♠ Pass 403♠ Pass 404♠ Pass 405♠ Pass 406♠ Pass 407♠ Pass 408♠ Pass 409♠ Pass 410♠ Pass 411♠ Pass 412♠ Pass 413♠ Pass 414♠ Pass 415♠ Pass 416♠ Pass 417♠ Pass 418♠ Pass 419♠ Pass 420♠ Pass 421♠ Pass 422♠ Pass 423♠ Pass 424♠ Pass 425♠ Pass 426♠ Pass 427♠ Pass 428♠ Pass 429♠ Pass 430♠ Pass 431♠ Pass 432♠ Pass 433♠ Pass 434♠ Pass 435♠ Pass 436♠ Pass 437♠ Pass 438♠ Pass 439♠ Pass 440♠ Pass 441♠ Pass 442♠ Pass 443♠ Pass 444♠ Pass 445♠ Pass 446♠ Pass 447♠ Pass 448♠ Pass 449♠ Pass 450♠ Pass 451♠ Pass 452♠ Pass 453♠ Pass 454♠ Pass 455♠ Pass 456♠ Pass 457♠ Pass 458♠ Pass 459♠ Pass 460♠ Pass 461♠ Pass 462♠ Pass 463♠ Pass 464♠ Pass 465♠ Pass 466♠ Pass 467♠ Pass 468♠ Pass 469♠ Pass 470♠ Pass 471♠ Pass 472♠ Pass 473♠ Pass 474♠ Pass 475♠ Pass 476♠ Pass 477♠ Pass 478♠ Pass 479♠ Pass 480♠ Pass 481♠ Pass 482♠ Pass 483♠ Pass 484♠ Pass 485♠ Pass 486♠ Pass 487♠ Pass 488♠ Pass 489♠ Pass 490♠ Pass 491♠ Pass 492♠ Pass 493♠ Pass 494♠ Pass 495♠ Pass 496♠ Pass 497♠ Pass 498♠ Pass 499♠ Pass 500♠ Pass 501♠ Pass 502♠ Pass 503♠ Pass 504♠ Pass 505♠ Pass 506♠ Pass 507♠ Pass 508♠ Pass 509♠ Pass 510♠ Pass 511♠ Pass 512♠ Pass 513♠ Pass 514♠ Pass 515♠ Pass 516♠ Pass 51

Algeria denounces U.S. rights report

State Department: 70,000 died since '92

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algeria on Monday denounced a U.S. State Department report that claimed 70,000 had died in the Algerian civil war since 1992, saying the report was flawed by a "notable lack of exactitude."

The annual human rights report issued in Washington on Friday also blamed some of the killing on the government, noting "improvements in some areas," but alleging that "serious human rights abuses continued."

An Algerian foreign ministry spokesman quoted by the official APS news agency said the actual death toll from the violence was 26,536.

"Algeria regrets that the State Department found it necessary to give currency to tenacious allegations and suppositions fed by certain sources that have lost all their credibility by reason of their well-known partisanship," said the spokesman.

The State Department said that between 6,000 and 7,000 people were killed in Algeria in 1997 alone.

"Increasingly in 1997,

armed groups massacred large groups of civilians, including infants, often in apparent retaliation against villages or families that had

'Security forces carried out extra judicial killings, torture'

ceased providing support to them," the rights report said. "Armed Islamists particularly targeted women," the report said, attributing part of the bloodshed to "revenge, banditry and land grabs."

"The security forces carried out extra judicial killings, were responsible for numerous disappearances, routinely tortured or otherwise abused detainees, and arbitrarily arrested and

detained or held incommunicado many individuals suspected of involvement with armed Islamist groups," the report said.

The Algerian foreign ministry spokesman said the allegations "had been rejected at the time as totally devoid of foundation and consequently the analyses and judgements that the State Department has used as a basis hardly correspond to the true data of the situation."

The statement said Algerian Prime Minister Ahmad Ouyahia had "solemnly" reported to the National Assembly last month that the "real number" of victims of the civil violence was 26,536 dead, including civilians and security force members, since 1992.

Last month, U.S. Ambassador in Algiers Cameron Hume was summoned to the foreign ministry for explanations after the State Department had called for an international fact-finding mission to Algeria to investigate the massacres of civilians.

Six more British warplanes head for Mediterranean on way to Gulf

LONDON (R) — British navy warplanes took off on Monday to join a British royal navy aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean as pressure mounted on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Six Sea Harrier jump jets left their base at Yeovilton, south-west England, to join the carrier Illustrious, officials said.

The Illustrious, currently in the Mediterranean, will replace the aircraft carrier Invincible in the Gulf region.

Britain has backed the United States in threatening military force in an attempt to persuade Mr. Hussein to allow United Nations weapons inspectors the access they require to government sites in Iraq.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair angered Iraq at the weekend when he said Mr. Hussein was an "evil dictator" who

must be stopped from terrorising the world with chemical and biological arms.

Mr. Blair's words apparently upset Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Sahaf, who charged on Sunday that U.S. and British officials were using ugly rhetoric against Iraq.

Mr. Sahaf told reporters in Baghdad he was especially saddened by Mr. Blair's words, saying Mr. Blair had used "cheap adjectives" to describe Mr. Hussein.

The "evil dictator" jibe was Mr. Blair's bluntest warning to the Iraqi leader so far and came just a few days before the British prime minister flies to Washington, where the Iraqi crisis is expected to top the agenda in his meetings with U.S. President Bill Clinton.

British Defence Secretary George Robertson said on

Sunday that London, along with the United States, was willing to use force against Iraq if President Hussein did not allow the United Nations to inspect suspected weapons sites.

Mr. Robertson said he would not reveal what military options were being considered although he added: "We're not in the business of overthrowing Saddam Hussein — that will be the job for his people."

On Saturday British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright met in London to discuss Mr. Hussein's refusal to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors, and told reporters afterwards that London and Washington stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the crisis.

U.S. voices pessimism over peace efforts as Turk FM heads for Iraq

ANKARA (AFP) — The United States Monday voiced pessimism over international efforts for a diplomatic solution to the Iraq conflict, as Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem prepared to visit Baghdad for last-ditch peace talks.

"We're sceptical, given [Iraqi President] Saddam Hussein's history and his inability to keep his promises," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs Marc Grossman said after a meeting with Turkish foreign ministry officials.

His remarks came as Iraq agreed to a visit by Mr. Cem for last-minute talks in Baghdad on the ongoing crisis over U.N. arms inspections.

"Today we received a positive reply from Iraq for our minister's visit to Baghdad," Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Necati Utkan said, adding that Mr. Cem could leave for Baghdad on Tuesday or Wednesday.

"The visit's aim is to contribute to a peaceful solution to the conflict," Mr. Utkan said.

Mr. Grossman, meanwhile, said any diplomatic overture to Baghdad "should stress Iraq must comply, comply and comply with the U.N. Security Council resolutions."

"We prefer a diplomatic solution... But all options are open," he added.

Mr. Grossman arrived in Ankara late Sunday at the head of a high-level delegation that included U.S. Air Force General Joseph Ralston, vice chairman of the

U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Downplaying the sensitive issue of U.S. planes being allowed to use the allied Incirlik airbase in southern Turkey to launch military strikes against Iraq, Mr. Ralston focused on matters of common concern for Washington and Ankara.

"The Turkish military, the U.S. military are in a strong agreement with the dangers of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction," he said after Monday morning's meeting.

Questioned about the issue of Incirlik, which the United States used extensively for air raids against Iraq in the 1991 Gulf war, Mr. Ralston was more circumspect.

"No decisions have been made on the use of force and as a result there is no new request of the Turkish military," he said.

Turkey's nationalist Vice Premier Bulent Ecevit said Friday that Ankara would not allow the United States to use Incirlik in the event of another armed conflict with Iraq.

However, conservative Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz later said Turkey would consider possible U.S. proposals.

Analysts said the discrepancy between the remarks stemmed from divisions in the government on how to handle the Iraq crisis.

Mr. Ecevit had a personal friendship with President Saddam in the past and staunchly opposed Turkey's presence in a multinational force during the Gulf war, when he was an opposition leader. He met the Iraqi leader in Baghdad a few times before and after the war.

Mr. Yilmaz also wants a diplomatic solution, but is keen not to damage relations with Washington, the analysts said.

The powerful Turkish military, which played a vital role in the overthrowing of an Islamist-led government last year, is equally set on maintaining close ties with the United States.

In their Ankara talks, the U.S. envoys preferred to bypass the political figures in the government and instead met the top military commander, General Ismail Hakkı Karadayı, his deputy and a senior foreign ministry bureaucrat.

They were, however, due to have brief talks with Mr. Cem in Istanbul later Monday, regarding the foreign minister's planned trip to Baghdad.

Since the Gulf war, a joint air force of U.S., British and Turkish warplanes based at Incirlik have been carrying out reconnaissance flights over northern Iraq to enforce a "no-fly" zone for Iraqi aircraft.

There are currently more than 40 allied aircraft stationed at the airbase.

Eighteen allied aircraft, including U.S. F-15 and F-16 fighters and two tanker planes, took off for reconnaissance missions from Incirlik on Monday morning, the state-run Anatolian news agency reported.

Despite Ankara's staunch support for the multinational force during the Gulf war, Turkish officials later complained that U.N.-sponsored sanctions against Iraq hit Turkey's economy.



MOST BEAUTIFUL MILK SHOP IN THE WORLD: Romy Floegel serves a customer, Monday, at the cheese counter of the Pfunds Molkererei (Pfunds Dairy) milk shop in Dresden. More than 3,000 hand-painted tiles decorate the walls and the ceiling of the shop, which was built in 1892 in the Art Nouveau style. Having been reopened 1995 after elaborate restoration, the shop has been named the 'Most Beautiful Milk Shop in the World' by the editors of the Guinness Book of Records (AP photo)

PNA denies report that it is preparing for bloody confrontations with Israeli army

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority has made wide-scale preparations for a bloody confrontation with the Israeli army if the peace process breaks down completely, the U.S. magazine Time reported Monday.

The authority has stocked heavy weapons and reinforced its defences around West Bank towns in a bid to inflict heavy casualties if the Israeli army invades self-rule areas in the case of a collapse of the peace process, Time said.

A high-ranking Palestinian security official denied the report to AFP. "These reports are lies and part of a vicious campaign by Israel to weaken the Palestinian position," he said, asking not to be named.

Israeli military experts, quoted in the daily Haaretz, also expressed doubts about aspects of the Time report but said Palestinian President Yasser Arafat was taking "defensive" measures to prepare for possible Israeli military operations.

The Time article quoted an unnamed senior Palestinian security official saying Mr.

Arafat had developed a contingency plan to spark an escalation of clashes by Palestinians throwing stones and firebombs at Israeli soldiers.

The purpose would be to goad the Israeli army into invading Palestinian self-rule areas and sparking heavy battles between Israeli soldiers and armed Palestinian security forces, as well as illegally armed Palestinian civilians, the magazine said.

The Palestinian leader believes the heavy casualties which would result from armed clashes would force the United States to intervene and impose a diplomatic solution favourable to the Palestinians, the official said.

The Israeli press has frequently reported that the Israeli army has a number of scenarios for military action in the West Bank in case of violence, including a plan for reoccupying the major towns of the West Bank now under complete Palestinian control.

Both sides have in mind the open gun-battles which broke out in September 1996 between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian security forces

and which left more than 80 people dead, mostly Palestinian civilians.

Those clashes were sparked as the army moved to put down civilian protests which erupted across the West Bank against Israel's opening of an archaeological tunnel near Al Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City. Afterwards the U.S. stepped up its mediation in the peace process and pushed the two sides into the January 1997 Hebron accord.

The Palestinians have warned repeatedly in recent weeks that the peace process is in danger of exploding into violence, blaming Israel for the 10-month-long deadlock in negotiations.

President Arafat would use the plan only as a last resort if negotiations collapse, the Palestinian official told Time.

Time quoted unidentified sources saying the Palestinians were preparing for possible battles by smuggling heavy weapons into the self-rule areas, including mortars, anti-tank missiles and Katyusha rockets. It said the Palestinians had

also developed an emergency system of requisitioning civilian tractors in the self-rule areas in order to dig trenches and build ramparts to slow down the Israeli army.

Palestinian security forces used a surprise snowstorm in Israel and the West Bank in December to practice the system on the pretext of using the tractors to clear snow, Time said.

Israeli officials told the magazine a mobile war room had been set up by the Palestinians, headed by Haj Ismail, head of the Palestinian National Forces, and that morgues and emergency wards in Palestinian hospitals had been improved to deal with casualties.

The Haaretz said the Palestinians could have manufactured anti-tank rockets and mines on their own without smuggling them into the territories.

It said they have also been building bunkers and trenches around self-rule towns, particularly Nablus, which would slow an Israeli offensive and cause heavy casualties.

German sentenced to death for having sex, ready to marry Iranian woman

TEHRAN (AP) — A German businessman sentenced to death in Iran for allegedly having sex with an Iranian woman is prepared to marry her, sources close to the case said Monday.

Helmut Hofer, 54, has told Iranian authorities he is ready to marry the woman, Vahideh Qassemi, a 26-year-old medical student, the sources said. Last week, an Iranian court sentenced Mr. Hofer to death for having sex with Ms. Qassemi. Legal experts in Iran said the death sentence would likely be overturned by the supreme court. The verdict applies only if the woman is married or if she was raped.

Mr. Hofer was charged with "zenaze moshene," which under Iran's Islamic laws is defined as adultery with a married woman or sex between a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man.

Legal experts said that under Iran's Islamic law, the simplest option open to Mr. Hofer to escape punishment was to agree to marry the woman. But Mr. Hofer would have to become a Muslim to do that, because Islam forbids mixed marriages in which the man is not a Muslim.

Clinton buoyed by positive polls, predictions he will ride out scandal

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. President Bill Clinton could take comfort Monday in sky-high opinion polls and the prediction by one key figure in the sex-and-coverage scandal that he would weather the flap.

The controversy will "go away" and he will remain in office, the lawyer for the woman who allegedly had an affair with Mr. Clinton predicted Sunday as the president enjoyed nearly record high job approval ratings.

"It'll go away. It'll pass," William Ginsburg, attorney for 24-year-old former White House intern Monica Lewinsky, told NBC.

"The president will remain in office, he'll do a good job, we'll all, hopefully, have a sound economy, keep our jobs, and I think everything's going to be fine," he said.

Mr. Ginsburg also told CBS Television Sunday that if his client were given full immunity, he would gladly let her undergo a lie detector test.

His comments came as Mr. Clinton pulled off a stunning reversal of fortunes, going from aggressive damage control to a week-end playing golf.

The president's record approval rating, a dwindling stream of revelations on what had been his worst scandal yet, and a press

corps now engaged in soul-searching rather than a feeding frenzy were all factors that combined to let Mr. Clinton relax over the weekend.

Mr. Clinton spent the weekend at the presidential retreat in Camp David outside Washington with his daughter Chelsea.

Television footage showed him enjoying a game of golf under sunny winter skies.

A Washington Post survey published Sunday showed that 67 per cent of those polled approved of the president's job performance, and 55 per cent said he has the honesty and integrity to serve as president.

However, 53 per cent believe that Mr. Clinton was lying when he denied having an affair with Ms. Lewinsky. A CNN-Time magazine poll released late Friday showed Mr. Clinton's job approval rate at a whopping 68 per cent — a high for Mr. Clinton and comparable to the highest ratings of President Ronald Reagan, considered the benchmark of popularity among recent presidents.

Earlier polls by ABC and NBC television, as well as Newsweek magazine, show similar results.

Independent counsel Kenneth Starr, however, is continuing his probe of the alleged affair and, more importantly, the alleged

attempt to cover it up.

Mr. Ginsburg's predictions that Mr. Clinton would survive the ordeal could only have comforted the White House, as would his indications that Ms. Lewinsky was far from striking an immunity deal with Mr. Starr.

Mr. Ginsburg appeared on five Sunday morning talk shows in a final media blitz to defend his young client before taking her home to California to visit her father.

Ms. Lewinsky has reportedly said on secretly made audio tapes that she had a sexual affair with the president and that he urged her to deny it under oath.

In a sworn affidavit submitted Jan. 7 in the Paula Jones sexual harassment suit against the president, Ms. Lewinsky denied having had any such affair. Mr. Ginsburg repeated Sunday that Ms. Lewinsky stands by that statement.

If it is proven that Mr. Clinton and Ms. Lewinsky did in fact have a sexual relationship, she and Mr. Clinton could face perjury charges, since Mr. Clinton is believed to have denied the affair as well in a separate deposition in the Jones case.

Mr. Clinton has strongly denied the allegations, although he has pointedly refused to say exactly what his relationship with Ms. Lewinsky was.



Vienna's homeless will have a ball

VIENNA (AFP) — While the rich and glamorous gather later this month for Vienna's exclusive Opera Ball, the city's homeless are planning their own more modest celebration down the road. The Operfeller, German for "Victims' Ball," a play on the German Opernball — will be held at the Fine Art School on Feb. 19 while the great and good gather at the world-famous opera house. The Opera Ball, hosted by President Thomas Klestil, traditionally boasts the most glamorous guest list. The Fine Art School happens to be the alma mater of one of Austria's more infamous sons: Adolf Hitler studied there before making his way to Germany and into history.

Rockefeller's grand-daughter to play Lewinsky

NEW YORK (AFP) — A grand-daughter of Nelson Rockefeller — who died of a heart attack in the arms of his young mistress — plans to play the part of Monica Lewinsky for a New York theatre group. Ingrid Rockefeller is part of a troupe called "Loose Lips," which does a political satire show at a New York club. What with all that is going on in Washington, the group has decided to add a skit based on taped conversations between Lewinsky and former colleague Linda Tripp about Lewinsky's alleged affair with President Bill Clinton.

Church urges British MPs to set an example

LONDON (AFP) — The head of the Church of England has pleaded with Prime Minister Tony Blair for his government to set an example of monogamy and the sanctity of marriage. The Sunday Times reported. The Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey has written to Blair expressing concern that ministers are taking their unmarried consorts abroad at taxpayers' expense and failing to buttress the institution of marriage, the report said. The paper said the church was concerned at the "ambiguity at the heart of government" revealed by Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's ex-marital affair with his secretary Gaynor Regan.

Britain may pardon wartime witch

LONDON (R) — The last woman to be jailed in Britain for witchcraft may be offered a posthumous pardon more than 40 years after her death, officials said. Helen Duncan was jailed for nine months in 1944 under the 1735 Witchcraft Act for claiming to have conjured up the spirit of a sailor killed on a battleship. The sinking of the ship was at the time a state secret and British authorities believed she could be a wartime security risk. They feared she might "see" and reveal the sites for the forthcoming D-day landings in France. Officials said British Interior Minister Jack Straw was now prepared to consider a pardon for the psychic.

Stephen King 'X-Files' script doesn't make the grade

NEW YORK (AP) — Horror writer Stephen King may be a best-selling author, but his script for an episode of "The X-Files" wasn't quite what the television show was looking for. The script was first sent back by producer Chris Carter for revisions, then was rewritten completely. "Chris is a real gentleman, but basically he came back to me and said 'this isn't what we wanted,'" King says in TV Guide. The rewritten episode is scheduled for broadcast in the United States on Feb. 8.